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Forty Five
S E R M O N S
O N
Several Subjects.

In Three Volumes.

By ANDREW SNAPE, D. D.
late Provost of *King's-College*, in *Cambridge*.

Prepared for the Press by the AUTHOR, and now
first published from his Original Manuscripts,
(except Ten that were printed in his Life-time.)

B Y

JOHN CHAPMAN, D. D. Chaplain to his
Grace the Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*. And,
WILLIAM BERRIMAN, D. D. Fellow of
Eton-College.

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SERM.



S E R M O N I.


Divine Worship due to the whole
Trinity. Mr. *Hutchin's* Gift
on St. *Mark's* Day at St. *Mary*
le Bow.



MATT. IV. IO.

*Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy
God, and him only shalt thou
serve.*



THE worthy Person deceased, SERM.
who gave Occasion to our as- I.
sembling here on this Day, 
having recommended, as a Subject of
this Anniversary Discourse, the Excellency
and Use of the Liturgy of the Church of
England; I shall endeavour, in my Pro-
VOL. III. B portion,

SERM. portion, to contribute to the End proposed
 I. by him.

THAT there is a God, or Supreme Being, of infinite Power and Perfection, who both originally framed this System of the Universe which we behold, and of which we are a Part, and has continued, ever since its first Formation, to sustain, uphold, and govern it: And that it is the Duty as well as Interest of all the rational Part of the Creation, to worship and pay Homage to that great Author of their Being, is demonstrable from the Light of Nature: The Beauty, Proportion, and Order of the Workmanship may serve to convince us of the one; and a Feeling of our Wants and Imperfections, and a Consciousness of our dependent Condition, of the other.

IT is likewise apparent (as one has lately observ'd) from the universal Harmony of Nature, that all Things both in the Heavens and the Earth are under one Direction, under the uniform Direction of one Supreme Will.

BUT as it was a Point of great Uncertainty before, what Sort of Service would be
 most

most acceptable to that Sovereign Power, the Christian Revelation has clear'd up all such Doubts, and taught us how to serve him with a well-pleasing and regular Devotion. We are directed how and for what to pray to him, with what Frame and Disposition of Mind we must approach him, and thro' whose Mediation and Intercession we must make our Requests to him: How to conceive rightly of his Divine Nature and Attributes, to possess our selves with just Sentiments of him, and address him in proper Terms: To keep the happy Mean between superstitious Horrour, and rude Irreverence: How to behave our selves toward him in the Closet, and how in the publick Congregation of the Faithful.

SERM.
I.

PURSUANT to such general Directions, and conformably to the Scripture Rules, not only private Christians have put up their Supplications to him for the Relief of their respective Wants, but Churches or Congregations of Christians have join'd their united Prayers for Blessings of a publick Nature, and such as related to the Good of the Community, not forgetting

SERM. to recommend to the Father of Mercy
 I. and Fountain of all Goodness, the several
 Occasions and Necessities of the particular Members that compose the Body.

AND for the performing this Duty with the greater Reverence and Solemnity, stated Forms have been appointed, as by other national Churches, so by the Church of *England* in particular, the Vindication of whose Worship shall be the Business of this Discourse.

BUT as this is a Subject of large Extent, consisting of different Branches, and capable of being handled in various Methods, as our *Common-Prayer* may be consider'd, with regard either to its intrinsic or comparative Excellence, as one's Labour may be usefully employ'd either in pointing out Beauties, or wiping off Aspersions, as the Judiciousness of its Composition, the Propriety and Unaffectedness of its Stile, the Harmony of its Offices, the Decency of its Ceremonies, its Tendency to promote a Spirit of true Piety and Devotion, and its Conformity to the Rules of Scripture and the Model of ancient Liturgies, would be very proper Topics

picks of Discourse, on such an Occasion, and as there is much to be said in Vindication of Forms of Prayer in general, as well as our own in particular; you will easily conceive that such a Variety of Matter cannot well be comprehended within the Compass of a single Discourse. And I doubt not but those who have gone before, and are to come after me in this Undertaking, have or will fully discuss the before-mention'd and many other Points by me omitted.

THAT which I shall have principally in View, and on which I shall lay the main Stress of my Endeavours, will be, to justify our publick Worship, not so much with respect to Circumstantials, as to the true Object of our Worship: The Question now before us will not be, how we pay our Adoration, but to whom we pay it: And I trust it will be prov'd to you, to your entire Satisfaction, that in praying according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, we do not misplace our Devotion, that we equally avoid the dangerous Extremes of Idolatry and Profaneness, that we render Divine Honours

SERM. to whom Divine Honours are due, and
 I. to no other, and that, according to the
 Direction in my Text, we *worship the
 Lord our God, and him only do we serve.*

I HAVE the less Inclination at present to enter into any Argument with those who make a Scruple of conforming to our Service, on the Score of some Matters of Ceremony, and under the Pretence of purer Ordinances and better Edification; because I hope and believe that some of their Prejudices are greatly lessen'd, and much of that Stiffness and Rigour abated, with which they formerly inveigh'd against our Communion.

A FARTHER Reason why I forbear entering into that Controversy, is, because we have a more dangerous, and at this Time a more growing Sort of Adversaries to deal with, who are impatient to have our Liturgy new model'd, in compliance with their heretical Notions, with a Pretence indeed of avoiding Matters of doubtful Disputation, but with a manifest View of subverting the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and robbing two of the Divine Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity,
 of


of that Honour and Worship, which is SERM.
unquestionably due to them. I.

THAT in Fact, as our Liturgy now stands, we jointly adore the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and pay an equal Degree of Reverence to all three, as equal in Power, Majesty and Glory, and eternally subsisting in the same undivided Essence, is plain and evident, and there is scarce a single Office in the whole Service-Book, from whence it does not manifestly appear, that we worship and praise, ascribe Honour and Glory to the whole Trinity: The Instances are too numerous to be repeated, too well known to the Frequenters of our Church to need a Repetition, many, tho' not all of them ready collected by an unfriendly Hand, who has mark'd them out as Rocks of Offence, and yet too strong to be eluded: And whatever Artifices have been, or can be used to enervate the Force of them, or to insinuate that such Passages are capable of being understood in any Sense, that falls short of the highest and most consummate Perfection, or be made consistent with any Notion that implies the

SERM. least Abatement or comparative Diminution in any of the Persons of the Godhead, save in the Point of Order only, must be fallacious and forc'd, and as great a Violence as can be put upon Words It highly concerns us then to satisfy our selves, that in worshipping the three Divine Persons, and ascribing to them the same infinite Perfections, we are guilty of no Idolatrous Prostitution of the sole and sovereign Prerogative of God ; that we do not provoke his Jealousy by transferring his Glory to them, who by Nature are no Gods ; that we adore the Creator and not the Creature, and as I said before, that *we worship the Lord our God, and him only do we serve.*

THE Prohibition of Idolatry is the first and great Command of the Law ; and this Quotation of our Saviour, in his Dispute with *Satan*, is a Re-inforcement, under the Gospel, of that and all other Precepts to the same Purpose : And I have made Choice of these Words for the Subject of my Discourse, to vindicate them from Misconstruction, because, however our Adversaries may object that they stare us in the

the

the Face, and are a Condemnation of our SERM.
 Practice, as if it must necessarily follow that I.
 three co-essential and co-eternal Persons 
 must be understood of as many Gods; yet
 the Charge at last will be found to recoil
 upon themselves, so many of them at least
 as allow any Sort of Worship to be due
 to our blessed Saviour, as the *Socinians*
 and *Arians* do; and those who allow him
 none will fall under the Charge of great
 Impiety and Profaneness.

THE *Socinians* degrade him into a
 meer Man, and will not acknowledge that
 he had any Being, before he was conceived
 in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, and
 yet they not only agree that Worship is
 due to him, but they even contend for it:
 But how can any Acts of Devotion, at-
 tended with such Principles, be excus'd
 from the Imputation of Creature-Worship,
 or how can such Supplicants be said to
 worship the Lord their God, and to serve
 him only?

THE antient *Arians* confess'd our Sa-
 viour's Pre-existence before the Worlds,
 but denied his Co-eternity with the Fa-
 ther, alledging that there was a Time
 when

SERM. when he was not, nor would they except
 I. him from the Number of Creatures, and
 yet they worshiped and invoked him,
 for which they were justly taxed as Ido-
 laters by the Catholick Fathers.

THE modern *Arians* (I was going to tell you what they maintain in reference to these Matters, but as, in the present critical Conjuncture, they do not seem dispos'd to speak out plainly what they allow or disallow, but to be waiting for a favourable Opportunity of opening more largely their whole Scheme, it would be difficult to ascertain what their Tenets are). The modern *Arians*, I say, have sometimes acknowledg'd, that Christ was not only before the Worlds, but that he was the instrumental Cause, under God the Father, of making the Worlds, nay, and sometimes too, that he is God, or a divine Person, but not God coequal with the Father ; that he is to be worshiped, but not with absolute, supreme Worship. But as it is most certain that there can be no Medium between the Creator and Creatures, nor any lawful Worship but to the Creator, 'tis as certain, that if he is the Creator, he is entitled

titled to all Worship, or if a Creature, to S E R M.
none. So that they also are comprehended under the Guilt of Idolatry, as heartily as they would be thought to abhor it : And they seem indeed so sensible of it, that they have cautiously avoided, in their latest Writings, the same Concessions they had made before, of which I shall give you a flagrant Instance, before I finish this Discourse. I.

IN the farther Prosecution whereof, I shall aim at these two Ends.

First, To satisfy you, that the Adoration of the blessed Trinity, as that Doctrine is taught in our Articles, and the Practice enjoyn'd in our Liturgy, is our bounden Duty, and agreeable to the Will of God, as revealed in Scripture : And that the confining all our Reverence to the Person of the Father only, in Exclusion of any other Person, is, upon any Principle, impious and profane : I have shewn you already that upon some it is idolatrous.

Secondly,

SERM.

I.



Secondly, To give you a seasonable Caution against being ensnared by some unfair Devices which have lately been contriv'd, in order to beguile unwary People insensibly out of this Faith, and mislead them from the true Worship.


First, I shall endeavour to satisfy you,
 &c.

IN the Name of these three Divine Persons, we receive our first Initiation into the Christian Church, according to our blessed Lord's own Command and Institution. *Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, were his own Words to his Disciples, and his final Charge with which he took his Leave of them, when he was just going to ascend to his Father. Can it be imagin'd that he would have put himself and the Holy Spirit so much upon the Level with the Father, as to have join'd their Name with *his*, with that Name for the Sanctification of which he express'd so great Concern, and taught them to petition in their daily Prayer,


Prayer, that it might be hallow'd, if *they* were not equally entitled to Homage and Adoration? This will appear more unlikely, when we consider what is said just before, that when they saw him, they worshiped him. If such Worship had been faulty, here surely had been a proper Occasion for him to have check'd their misguided Zeal, as the Angel did that of St. *John*, and to have reprov'd them with a — *See ye do it not, for I am your Fellow-Servant, and of your Brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the Sayings of this Book: Worship God*, Rev. xxii. 9. Or as St. *Peter* rebuked *Cornelius*, when he fell down at his Feet and worshiped him, — *Stand up, I myself also am a Man*, Acts x. 25, 26. Or as *Paul* and *Barnabas* restrained the Men of *Lystra* from doing Sacrifice to them, by saying, *Sirs, Why do ye these Things? We also are Men of like Passions with you*, Acts xiv. 15.

THUS did holy Men, thus did a holy Angel disclaim and decline, with Abhorrence, the receiving to themselves divine Honour; and thus would our blessed Lord have done likewise, if he, like them, had been a
created

SERM. created Being, and were not infinitely su-

I.  superior to Men and Angels. But when instead of any Reproof or Instruction to the contrary, he proceeds rather to magnify than lessen the Veneration they had for him, how certainly may we conclude, that he who would be far from entrenching on his Father's Prerogative, or assuming any more than justly belong'd to him, well knew, and was willing they should understand, that he was a proper Object of their reverential Addresses? so that we have here both an Example of Worship paid to Christ, and a Precept in Confirmation of that Example.

AND perhaps it may be not unworthy our Observation, that the Author of the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, in his Collection of Texts relating to the Worship of the Son, has totally omitted these Words in St. *Matthew*, *When they saw him they worshiped him*, though he cites the parallel Place in St. *Luke*, where they do not happen to be placed in so strong a Light, nor to be follow'd by so remarkable an Allowance and Justification of the Practice.

THERE is another Passage where the SERM. Worship of the Son is expressly mentioned, I. not by Men indeed, but, which, is much  more, by the Heavenly Host, *Heb. i. 6.* *When he bringeth in the first begotten into the World, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him.* If he is the Object of their Reverence, how much more necessarily must he be of ours ! He was their Creator indeed, but *us* he both created and redeem'd ; for verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Nature of Man, so that he has certainly the highest Right to our Adoration, both as remov'd from him at a more awful Distance, and indebted for the strongest Obligations.

And this Passage, by the Way, will furnish us with a Confutation of one Evasion urged by the *Arian* Writers, who can acquiesce in the Worship paid to Christ, but not as he is God, or as having been with the Father from all Eternity, but in respect to his Redemption of Mankind ; nor will they allow it any higher Date than from the Commencement of his mediatorial

SERM. rial Kingdom, nor other Foundation than
 I. his acquired Dominion over us.

W

BUT I say, the Place of Scripture now under Consideration, shews his Right to be founded on an antecedent Dominion : For what Claim could he have to the Worship of Angels, whom he did not redeem, if his being the Mediator between God and Man were the only Thing that gives him a Title to Adoration ? To which let me add, that it appears from the Place in *St. Matthew* which was just now under Consideration, that the Disciples actually worshiped him, before he acquainted them, that *All Power in Heaven and Earth was given to him* ; from whence it may be infer'd, that their Reverence towards him did not take its Rise from that Principle, but from that Conviction of his divine Power, which made *St. Thomas* cry out, *My Lord, and my God.*

A memorable Confession this ! from his just-before unbelieving Disciple ; nor can I help observing, that this Instance of Devotion also, by not being condemn'd by our Saviour, stands allow'd : He who thus profess'd his Faith, meets with a gentle
 Rebuke

Rebuke indeed for not believing sooner SERM. and on less Evidence, but is not blamed I. for carrying his Devotion too far, or addressing him in Terms of too high a Reverence.

BUT with a higher Assurance still did the first Martyr *St. Stephen* pray to our blessed Lord, and invoke him with his dying Breath, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.* And of him it is particularly to be noted, that he was not only in general an inspired Person, and full of the Holy Ghost, but had the Advantage of an immediate and personal Revelation: The Heavens were opened to him, and he had a Foretaste of the Beatifick Vision, at the Time when he was uttering those Words: He beheld the Divine Glory, not as thro' a Glass darkly, not merely with the Eye of Faith, but with his natural Eye: Could such a Person, in such a Situation, be deluded or misled? Could he look into Heaven, and not perceive to whom the Adoration of the blessed Inhabitants was directed? How imperfect must our Knowledge be, who walk by Faith, if Intuition its self is no Preservative from Error? On

SERM. this Supposition it would follow, that the

I. Members of the triumphant, as well as militant Church, live in Darknefs and Ignorance, and our Hope of seeing God as he is, when once we are exalted to his heavenly Kingdom, would be groundless and imaginary.

THE Case then will stand thus. Either St. *Stephen*, in the midst of so bright a Direction, and glorious Illumination, was mistaken and prayed amiss) which I believe no one will be hardy enough to affirm) or this was no Prayer to Christ, which whoever denies, may as well deny that our Lord's own last Words were a Prayer to his Father: *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*: and, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit*, are Expressions very nearly allied, or if there be any Difference, it is in this, that the Words of the Martyr are in a more direct petitionary Form: Or lastly, if it be allowed, both that St. *Stephen* did pray to Christ, and that he prayed aright; then will it undeniably follow, that Christ is a proper Object of Prayer and Supplication.


AGAIN,

AGAIN, there is a great Number of SERM. Texts in the New Testament, wherein it I. is not only remotely hinted or implied, but strongly and roundly asserted of Christ, that he was the Creator of the Universe. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the Beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made:* Thus we read in the Entrance of St. John's Gospel. And again, *Heb. i. 2.* speaking of the Son, *by whom also he made the Worlds,* and *ver. 10. Thou, Lord, in the Beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works of thy Hands,* with what follows. I forbear to enumerate any more, or to paraphrase on these, the Words are so express, and so confessedly ascribe the Work of the Creation to our Saviour Christ, that some, who are very unfavourable to his real Divinity, will not dispute, but that he was the Accomplisher of that stupendous Operation. And one would think it should admit of as little Dispute, that he who

C 2

built

SERM. built all Things not only is God, but to
 I. be worshiped as God.

 BUT here they come in with a Distinction, and care not to attribute any more to him than a ministerial Creation, and nominal Divinity, and in Consequence of that, an inferior Sort of Worship. *All Things were made*, says one [*Ἰὶ αὐτῆ*] by *him*, as the ministring Cause; that so he [the Evangelist] might refer us to the supreme Power and Efficiency of the Father, as the Maker of all Things.

IT must be allow'd indeed, (and it is so essential a Point, as to be the Foundation of all Religion) that God the Father is the efficient Cause, the Maker and Preserver too of all Creatures that exist, whether visible or invisible, whether in Heaven or Earth, or Air, or Seas, whether animate or inanimate, whether intelligent, or wholly void of Understanding; but this however does not exclude either the Son or Holy Spirit from a joint Concurrence with him in the same Productions. There is but one Will in the eternal Mind, and whatsoever is willed, is the harmonious Consent of the Father, Son and
 Holy

Holy Ghost : I need not add, that whatsoever is effected or brought to pass, (for in speaking of God, whose Pleasure Nothing can resist, to will is to effect or bring to pass) is wrought by the mutual Co-operation of the Three Persons. And although, in a tactical and oeconomical View, the Father, as Head and Fountain of the Godhead, is frequently represented to us, as contriving ; the Son and Holy Ghost as executing : Yet there is so close an Intimacy and Union, such a ready and willing Communication of Properties between them ; that every Act performed by the Divine Power, is wrought by the combined good Pleasure and joint Operation of them all.

I and my Father are one, says our Saviour, *John* x. 30. And again, v. 38. *The Father is in me, and I in him*. And c. xv. v. 26. he calls the Holy Ghost *the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth or cometh forth from the Father*. And St. Paul, *1 Cor.* x. 11. *The Spirit searcheth all Things, yea the deep Things of God. For what Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man which is in him ?*

SERM. *Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man,
I. but the Spirit of God.*


FROM these Texts compared (and many more might be added) we may be assured, how strict an Union and Identity of Will there is between them, notwithstanding the Difference of their Personality; and how profane and irreverent it must be, to entertain any degrading or derogatory Thoughts, to be more backward in our Acknowledgments, or to yield an inferior and more imperfect Service to one than to the other. Each of them is our Creator, each our Preserver, each of them the Author of all the Blessings we either enjoy or hope for: And though our Saviour made the World in Conformity to his Father's Will, he made it in Conformity to his own Will also, as being the same with the Father's; nor did he act therein ministerially, but authoritatively: He was not barely the Instrument of bringing all Things out of Nothing, but, equally with the Father, the efficient Cause of such Production.

THE Almighty Father, however jealous he is of his Honour, and averse to having
it

it imparted to Idols, will never be dis-
 pleased at us, for ascribing that Honour
 and Glory to his only-begotten Son, which
 he had with *him* before the World began,
 or for honouring the Son, according to his
 own Direction, even as we honour the Fa-
 ther. There is, we agree, a Posteriority
 of Order in the Son and Holy Spirit, with
 Reference to their Emanation and Extrac-
 tion ; and so far it will always be our Du-
 ty principally, and in the first Place, to
 make our Supplications, to offer up our
 Praises and Thanksgivings, and to render
 all Honour and Adoration to God the Fa-
 ther, but not in Exclusion of the Son and
 Holy Spirit, who must still be intention-
 ally understood, even where they are not
 verbally recognized : Nor ought such a
 verbal Recognition in Form to be too rare
 and unfrequent, but to recur at proper In-
 tervals, in order to the habituating our
 Minds to sound Principles, and keeping up
 to the true Object of our Worship.

AND such is the Service we perform,
 when we pray according to the Liturgy of
 our Church, where God is acknowledged
 in all his great and glorious Attributes ;

SERM. where a due Provision is made for obser-

I.  ving a proper Subordination ; where we frequently implore the Almighty Father, through the Merits and Mediation of his Son, to grant us the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, to strengthen and confirm, to guide and comfort us : But we do not forget that they also are the Objects of our Adoration, that they have a Right to have all divine Perfections ascribed to them, and accordingly, on seasonable Occasions, we supplicate and invoke, we praise and magnify them, we give Thanks and Glory to them in Conjunction with the Father. So worshiped the primitive Saints and Martyrs, so worship the Host of Heaven, such Worship has continued, though not without its Opposers, through all Ages of the Church, and I trust in God, that the Endeavours of the present Impugners of it to extirpate and abolish it, will be as fruitless and unavailing as those of former Times have proved. And in Hopes of contributing, in some Measure, to the rendering them less successful, I shall now proceed, in the

Second Place, To give you a seasonable SERM.

Caution against being ensnared by some unfair Devices, which have lately been contrived, in order to beguile unwary People insensibly out of this Faith, and mislead them from the true Worship.

THERE has lately appeared a posthumous Book, in the Name of an Author, who was highly and justly esteemed in respect to his great Abilities, which will of Course fall into many Hands, and of some who may not be able to discern the Drift with which some Passages of it were wrote, though the Main of it is useful and instructive. It bears the Title of *An Exposition on the Catechism*, some Remarks on which have been lately published by a learned Writer, who charges the Expositor with dropping the Worship of two of the Divine Persons, as in other Instances, so particularly, in omitting to give any Explication of the Answer to that Question after the Creed ; *What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief ?* Answ. *First I learn to believe in God the Father, who bath made me and all the World.* Secondly,
in

SERM. in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and
 I. all Mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy
 Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the Elect
 People of God. To this it is replied, by
 one who has answered the Remarks, That
 what is thought neglected is fully explain-
 ed in the Exposition upon the Articles of
 the Creed, and that it would have been
 impertinent Repetition to have expound-
 ed those Things, when he had expound-
 ed the Foundations of them already.

I BELIEVE it will easily be admitted,
 that if this were a true Representation of
 the Case, there would be nothing blame-
 able in such an Omission ; If the Thing
 had been done before, there would have
 been no Occasion *actum agere* : And it is
 usual with other Expounders of the Ca-
 techism, barely to recite, without farther
 Explanation, the same Question and An-
 swer, as also those which follow the Com-
 mandments and the Lord's Supper : And
 that for the Reason intimated by him, be-
 cause it would be needless to make a fresh
 Comment on any Abstract, when the Bo-
 dy of the Work from which it is abstract-
 ed,

ed, hath been fairly and fully commented SERM.
on before. I.

THE Reason, I say, is a good one, if it were a true one. But in what Article of the Creed had it been fully explained? He is so cautious as not to refer us to any Place, and was conscious he could not refer to any: Though I think I can point out a Place, which he would have us take for such an Explanation. It is where the Expositor enters on the Eighth Article, *viz. I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

THE Creed, says he, being a Paraphrase on the Form of Baptism, is distinguished under three principal Heads, Our Belief in God the Father and Maker of all. Our Belief in the Son of God Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Judge of Mankind. And our Belief in the Holy Spirit of God, the Inspirer of the Prophets and Apostles, and the Sanctifier of the Hearts of all good Men.

I CANNOT but think it will be the concurrent Judgment of all, who will compare this Paragraph with the before-cited Answer in the Catechism, that this Place was intended by the Expositor to serve

SERM. serve for an Interpretation of that Answer

I. of the Catechumen ; that he had that Answer in View, when he wrote it, and his Vindicator also in his, when he vouched for him, that he had done what was complained of as neglected. Sure I am, that there is no other Passage in his whole Performance, that comes so near, or looks so like an Offer towards a Commentary on those Words.

THE Catechumen says, *I learn three Things*, reducing the twelve Articles of the Creed to three principal Heads ; so does the Expofitor too. Both the one and the other profess to believe in the Father as Maker, the Son as Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost as Sanctifier. And so far it is all well.

BUT here lies the Difference, (and a very material, a very weighty Difference it is) between the Compilers of the Catechism, and the Expounder of their Doctrine, in that the catechetical Profession, short as it is, has recognized the Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father : *First I learn to believe in God the Father who made me. Secondly in God*
the

the Son who hath redeemed me. Thirdly in SERM.
God the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me. I.

BUT does the Expofitor do the fame? No. He shifts off the Acknowledgment, by changing the Expreflion of *God the Son*, into *the Son of God*, and of *God the Holy Ghost*, into *the Holy Spirit of God*. But are thefe tantamount Expreflions? Or can this be called Expounding, when inftead of dilucidating and clearing up the Meaning of difficult Words, an ambiguous Phrafe is fubftituted in the Room of a plain and clear one; and the Reader, inftead of being enlightened and inftructed, is led into Darknefs and Confufion.

IF the Expreflion, *God the Son*, appeared too high to him, he might have declared his own Opinion, provided he had declared it as his own: But as the Title of his Book is, *An Expofition of the Church Catechifm*, he was in Honour and Confcience obliged to expound it in the Church's Senfe.

To conclude this Argument. If the Words I have cited from the Expofition of the Eighth Article, were not intended as an Explication of the catechetical Answer, the Remarker did him no Wrong
 in

SERM. in charging it as a faulty Omission ; for I
 I. will venture to affirm, that the whole
 Substance of that Answer is no where else
 expounded in the Book. Or if the former *were* introduced as a Recapitulation
 of, and explanatory of the latter ; I cannot
 help declaring, that that remarkable Profession
 of our Faith seems to me to have
 been repeated, only to be mis-repeated,
 and to have been explained, only to be
 explained away.

I SHALL add but one Observation
 more on what has been already controverted
 since the Publication of that Book. It
 has been urged in Excuse for what had
 been called Dropping the Worship of the
 Son and Holy Ghost, That the Catechism
 has said Nothing about such Worship ;
 and therefore there was no proper Occa-
 sion for the Expositor to mention it : We
 are referred to former Writings of the same
 Author, in which he is said, expressly to
 contend for the Worship of Christ. But
 in Reply to this, (not to enter into the
 Question, what Sort of Worship, and how
 limited, he formerly allowed to Christ)
 Will this Advocate for him maintain, that
 his

his Opinions have been uniform and un-
variable? If not, how can it be inferred
from what he taught many Years ago,
that his later Sentiments were the same,
when we see him so particularly scrupu-
lous, and affectedly cautious not to re-
assert the same Doctrine: And that too,
where it would have been so far from go-
ing out of his Way to do it, that the Oc-
casion required, and the Subject Matter
before him loudly called for it.

WAS he not almost unavoidably led to
it, *Page 11.* of his Book, where he
is enumerating the Duties of a Mem-
ber of Christ, and particularly speci-
fies these; to honour him, to depend up-
on him, to imitate him, to obey him, to
follow him, to be subject to him, but
not a Word of Worship?

WAS it altogether foreign to his Pur-
pose, when he had so well and so justly
established the Doctrine of the Unity of
God, to have added a few Lines, for the
Satisfaction of a Learner, how the Son
then could be called God, and the Holy
Ghost God, as they expressly are in the
Form he was expounding, so as to be
con-

SERM.
I.
~

SERM. consistent with that Unity? And was not

I. here also not only a fair Occasion given, but even a necessary Call and Demand upon him, to acknowledge the Divinity of Christ, and consequently his Right to be worshipped?

I MUST own, that as often as I peruse this Book, I do it with a still more melancholy View, when I consider for whose Use it was principally designed, namely, for theirs, who are to be instructed in the first Rudiments of Christianity; and that possibly some even of the Charity-Schools may soon have this Form of Instruction either openly introduced, or clandestinely insinuated, which I hope the worthy Trustees, who have taken such laudable Pains in promoting that good Design, will be watchful to prevent.

THERE are many good Expositions of the Catechism already in Use, plain and practical, and agreeable to sound Doctrine, where every thing necessary to be believed or performed by a Member of Christ's Body, is directly and perspicuously taught, without any subtle Evasions, or latent Reserves, where the Expositor is neither
afraid

afraid nor ashamed to tell you the Truth, SERM.
and the whole Truth ; where he fairly I.
expounds in that Sense, in which the }
Words were intended to be understood,
and does not interpret them in such a
Manner as to common Understandings
may appear found and orthodox, and to
give no Offence, but by the Help of a
dark metaphysical Term, thrown in here
and there, intelligible to few, but those
who are initiated and let into the mystical
and esoterick Meaning of the Author ;
capable of being applied, as Times shall
favour, and Opportunity serve, to very
different Purposes, from what they may
seem directed to, at first Sight, and be
found to be a Denial of those very Points,
as to which you would imagine there was
a Concession and Acquiescence.


MANY such Passages there are in the
before-mentioned Book, where it is scarce
possible even for the Teachers of the poor
Children to discover the whole Fallacy,
and consequently the Use of it must be
very unsafe ; even in the most useful and
instructive Parts of it, there is a Tincture
and Leaven of this Sort, which makes me

SERM. earnestly recommend it to you, that the

I. { young Persons, who by the charitable Assistance of good Christians, are trained up in the Ways of Godliness, and the Knowledge of the Christian Faith, may learn the Meaning of the Catechism from the old Expositions, unless any new one should be published by more unsuspected Hands, and with more of Openness and Sincerity, and less of Artifice.

SUCH palpable Collusion is certainly a sufficient Reason for being on your Guard, and not to pay an implicate Deference, in Matters of Faith, to any one, of how great Name and Character soever. Certainly such a Director as will not tell you plainly what he believes himself, or would have you believe, on so important a Head as the Object of Worship, who leaves you to conjecture which Way he is inclined, and is desirous to determine you, from artful Pretermiſſions, and what he has forborn to say, rather than speak outright, can be no safe Guide to follow: And the true Catholick Faith, into which you have been baptized, is of too dear a Concern, to be given up in Compliment to the supposed,
or

or even declared Opinion of the greatest S E R M.
Master of Reason and Learning.


I.


THIS naturally brings back to one's Remembrance a former Instance of no very sincere Dealing in the same Author, in a metrical Translation of the *Doxology* and *Te Deum*, substituted in the Room of a former Version provided by our present Metropolitan for the Use of the same Parish. In which new one, the *Doxology* in some Places is changed, and instead of giving Glory (as was done before) to the three Persons in the Godhead, the Father alone is glorified through the Son, without any Mention of the Holy Ghost.

AND of this Alteration not the least Notice was given in the Title of the reprinted Book, nor the remotest Hint, from whence one could suspect that it was not literally the same with what was already in the Hands of the Parishioners. Thus were unwary People to be cheated out of their Faith insensibly, and to be led into a destructive Snare, without any Suspicion whither they were going. Had the Alteration been ever so innocent in its self, yet surely it was a Piece of Justice due

SER M. both to the Reader, and the original Collector, fairly to have confessed in the Front of the Book, the Liberty that had been taken : Much more when there had been a Variation made in a Point of so great Concernment. The *Doxology* thus modelled, was frequently sung by the Inhabitants of that unhappy Parish, the Charity Children were taught it, and several Hundreds of Copies were sent abroad to the *Plantations*.

WHAT farther Innovations, in the same clandestine Manner, another Edition might have produced, if this had passed uncensured, is best known to the Searcher of Hearts ; and what may yet follow, in Defiance of all Censure, must be left to the Discovery of Time. It is too plain at least from many correspondent Circumstances, that the Change already made, was not without Design of lessening Peoples Reverence for the second and third Persons in the blessed Trinity. And what gives just Cause for Suspicion, that a farther Progress was intended in such an unjustifiable Liberty, is this Consideration, that without a farther Progress, the Steps already taken,


taken, must be very insignificant to those SERM.
 for whose Use they seem to have been cal- I.
 culated. 

THE Omission, I say, of the Son and Holy Ghost in two or three Places, where they had usually been mentioned in Terms of Adoration will afford but small Relief to the Opposers of the sacred Mysteries, so long as the whole publick Service does every where abound with Acknowledgments of their Divinity. And that Man's Conscience must be of a very peculiar Cast, who can comfort himself with the Thoughts that he has once avoided that very *Doxology* in Verse, which he had repeated in Prose, it may be ten Times in the same Day. Can you conceive any thing more capricious, than that a Man, who, at the End of every Psalm, can contentedly say, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost*, should yet make a Scruple of the same Form of Adoration, when only turned into Metre ?

AND the like Observation may be made on a very surprizing Change in the metrical Translation of the Beginning of *Te Deum*, according to this new Reformation.

SERM. That noble and lofty Song is daily repeated in our Morning Service, wherein the Praises of the whole Trinity are celebrated in the most strong and expressive Terms. How poor and unworthy an Attempt was it then, to pervert the Sense, and extinguish the Spirit of that exalted Composition by a studied Mis-translation, and to make it speak Nonsense, that it might not speak Orthodoxy?

To convince you that I do no Wrong to the new Translator, I will give you the Words as they stand both in the Old and New Version: But first let me recite the Passage as we find it in our *Commion-Prayer Book*. *The Holy Church throughout all the World doth acknowledge Thee the Father of an infinite Majesty: Thine Honourable, True, and Only Son: Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.* What Person of common Understanding does not see, that all the three Persons are here represented as intituled to an equal Degree of Acknowledgment, which both Translators render by Adoration, and that they are all to be referred in common to the Verb *acknowledge*? Of this the former Translator was duly sensible,

fible, who accordingly has given us this SERM.
 fair and honest Version of that Part which I.
 belongs to the Son and Holy Ghost. 

Giving due Adoration

Unto thy true and only Son,

And to the Holy Ghost, from whom

As the sole Spring our Comforts come.

But the new one could not, or would not see the obvious Meaning of Words, as plain as ever were expressed in any Language, but has given his own Turn to them, and presented the Reader not with what is in the Original, but with what he has a Mind should be there. It is as follows :

Paying all Adoration

(He does not say to whom, which leaves the Sentence imperfect.)

Through thy below'd and only Son,

And thy most Holy Spirit, &c.

BUT is there such a Word as *through*, or any Thing of equal Importance with it, in the Passage he pretends to render? Is it fair Dealing to thrust in a Word, on which

SERM. the Hinge of a Controversy turns, and to
 I. father it on another Person, whose declar'd Opinion is on the other Side, and so declared in that very Place? To call it *Te Deum* at the Top of the Page, and induce People to believe that they are singing, as they were used to do, that excellent Hymn turned into Metre, when they are singing what tends to enervate the Force of it, and to elude the Doctrine therein professed?

By the Help of such a Latitude in the Version, it is easy to represent any ancient Writer as a Favourer of whatever Opinions the Translator thinks fit: And after such an Instance as is now before us, I should not be at all surprized, if in a future Edition of this Book, the *Creed* should be dealt with in the same Manner, that the *Te Deum* has been in this, and *Athanasius* himself be taught to speak *Arianism*.

AND now, if any one should ask me, whether there is any Thing criminal or unsound in the Expression of adoring or glorifying God through Christ; I very freely answer, No, I confess it to be the Language of Scripture it self, and that *St. Paul* concludes his Epistle to the *Romans* with

with this *Doxology*, *To God only wise, be SERM.*
Glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. I.

WHERE then, it will be urged, lies the Harm, in speaking as an inspired Apostle had spoke before? To this I reply, That when that inspired Apostle wrote, there were no Disputes started about the Trinity: Our Saviour was but newly risen, and the Holy Ghost but newly given. That divine Act of Christ's raising himself from the Dead, was so fresh in their Remembrance, and the Holy Ghost wrought so powerfully and so wonderfully in and by the Apostles, that neither they nor their Followers had any Doubt about the Divinity of either. It was so much taken for granted, that whatever Glory was ascribed to one Person of the Godhead, was common to the three, that there was less Need of a more explicite Confession; and St. *Paul*, in the several Forms of Salutation, Blessing and *Doxology*, with which he begins and ends his *Epistles*, seems almost indifferent which of them he mentions, whether this or that, or all three, as sensible that which soever of them was specified, the others would be understood

SERM. stood to be virtually included : And we

I. are sure from his frequent Acknowledgment of the Divinity of them all, that when he stiles the Father *God only wise*, he no more intended to exclude the Son, than St. *Jude* meant to exclude the Father, when he said,— *To the only wise God our Saviour.*— And that although St. *Paul* gives Glory to God through Christ, (as all that we offer to God, or expect from him, must be conveyed through his Mediation) yet he glorified Christ also as God, and paid all divine Adoration to him.

BUT in process of Time, there arose Enemies to this Doctrine, and then those Hereticks made it a Mark of Distinction to adhere to the most concise and compendious Forms they could meet with in Scripture, overlooking such others as were more full and explicate, without considering that the Substance of such full Confessions, was in Effect comprehended in those short ones to which they did adhere.

ALTHO' therefore we both may and ought to glorify God through Christ, yet if we mean thereby to exclude Christ himself from the Glory which he had with
the

the Father before the World began, our Faith is unsound, and our Notions repugnant to what is expressly revealed in Scripture.

SERM.
I.

BUT that such an Exclusion was intended by the newly introduced *Doxology*, may be too evidently discerned.

I CONCLUDE with the Collect for the Day.

O Almighty God, who hast instructed thy holy Church with the Heavenly Doctrine of thy Evangelist St. Mark [and the other Evangelists] give us Grace, that being not like Children carried away with every Blast of vain Doctrine, we may be established in the Truth of thy Holy Gospel, through Jesus Christ our Lord;

TO whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, &c.





S E R M O N II.

The Character of hearing Prayer
a proper Ground for coming to
God.



PSAL. lxxv. 2.

*O thou that hearest Prayer, unto
thee shall all Flesh come.*

SERM.
II.



THE Holy Psalmist is here praising God for his manifold Grace and Goodness, whom he acknowledges to be the sole Author of all the Blessings which he himself or the rest of Mankind had already received, or had
Encourage-


Encouragement to expect, whether they SERM.
related to their Souls or Bodies ; that to II.
Him alone was to be ascribed Redemption
from Sin, Election to Favour, Admission
to his Holy Sanctuary, Deliverance from
Enemies, Protection from Dangers, and a
plentiful Supply of all Things necessary
for the Ease or Convenience of Life.

AND as he is most copious, and enlarges very amply and rhetorically on this last Particular, *viz.* his visiting the Earth and watering it, making it fruitful and blessing it with Increase ; the Psalm is with good Reason supposed to have been occasioned by a seasonable and gracious Relief, obtained by the earnest Supplication of his People, after a long-continued Drought and Scarcity, when both they themselves and the Earth, by whose Fruits they were to be sustained, were almost scorched up for lack of Moisture, whilst the refreshing Dew of Heaven was withheld from them.

BUT forasmuch as, while they were thus hungry and thirsty, and while their Soul fainted in them, they cried unto the Lord in their Trouble, and were accordingly

46 *The Character of hearing Prayer;*

SERM. ingly delivered from their Distress; the

II.  holy Psalmist very justly takes occasion from thence, to magnify God for the Greatness of the Deliverance: And he very fitly introduces the other great Things he was going to ascribe to him, with a Confession of his Readiness to hear and succour those that call upon him, and of the Obligation as well as Encouragement that arises from this his Willingness to hear and grant, to make our most humble Addresses to him, for whatever good Thing we stand in need of, and to him likewise to make our most grateful Returns of Praise and Thanks for such Requests as have been already answered. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion, and unto thee shall the Vow be performed. O thou that bearest Prayer, unto thee shall all Flesh come.* In which Words we may observe these four Things.

First, The Truth of the Assertion. God is indeed, what the Psalmist affirms of him, *a God that beareth Prayer.*

Secondly,

Secondly, That it is a Property belonging to God alone. THOU emphatically, and no other, art a God that hearest Prayer.

Thirdly, The Reasonableness and Force of the Inference drawn from that Assertion, *because he heareth Prayer, therefore shall all Flesh come to him.*

Fourthly, It will be proper to consider this Argument by way of Reverse, and to note, how unreasonable and vain a Thing it is, to come unto any Being, that is, to call upon any Being for Succour, that cannot hear our Prayer.

I. Let us consider the Truth of the Assertion, how God is indeed, what the Psalmist affirms of him, *a God that heareth Prayer. Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World,* ACTS xv. 18. *He is not far from every one of us, forasmuch as in him we live and move, and have our Being,* ACTS xvii. 27,

48 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. 28. There is no Action we undertake, no

II. Word we utter, no Thought we conceive, but he is privy to it, nay, he knew and understood it long before either that, or we ourselves were conceived: He is continually about our Path, and about our Bed, and spies out all our Ways; he discerns every Motion and Tendency of our Heart, and is a Witness as well as Judge of every Inclination. He knows the Sincerity or Deceitfulness of our Purposes, whether or no, or how far our outward Professions correspond with our secret Intentions, from what latent Springs our Actions proceed, what private Aims, what remote and consequential Advantages we have in View, whilst to our Fellow-Creatures we appear to be free from all Bias or Design, but that of doing Good and being serviceable in our Generation.

AND as we are thus assured in Scripture of the Perfection of His Knowledge in general, so particularly with Regard to Prayer, we have many repeated Assurances both in the Old and New Testament, that when we call upon him, He will hear us. *When I cry unto God,* says the Psalmist,

he

a proper Ground for coming to God. 49

he will hear me. In the Evening and in the Morning and at Noon Day will I call, and that instantly, and he shall hear my Voice.

SERM.

II.

WE are told that the Lord hearkneth and heareth, and a Book of Remembrance is written before him; that there is not a Word in our Tongues, but he knoweth it altogether, nor a Thought in our Hearts, that can be with-holden from him.

WE are exhorted to enter into our Clofet, and shut the Door, and to pray unto our Father that seeth in Secret; and we read of holy and devout Persons, whose Supplications, tho' offered up in the most private Manner, have not only ascended for a Memorial before God, but have actually procured for them an immediate Supply of the Blessings they implored.

THUS it was in the Case of *Hannah*, who prayed to the Lord in the Bitterness of her Soul, and wept sore: And tho' old *Eli*, who observing the Motion of her Lips, but hearing no articulate Sound, had put a very hard Construction on her Proceeding, and judged her to be heated


50 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. with something else than the real Fervour
II. of Devotion ; yet God who seeth not as
Man seeth, and knew the Sincerity of her
Heart, accepted her Supplication, and
granted her the Thing she prayed for.

THUS was *Solomon* heard, when he asked for a wife and understanding Heart, and Ability to judge so great a People, in Preference to Riches and Honour, and other worldly Advantages, which are made the usual Subjects of most Men's Wishes, and such as their Hearts are most intently set upon. For we read, that as the Reward of his pious and prudent Choice, God was pleased not only to grant that which was the direct Matter of his Prayer, but even those inferior and subordinate Blessings too, which, in Consideration of Wisdom he had postponed, were added to his Portion.

IN like Manner when good *Hezekiah* had received a Summons by the Prophet to prepare for immediate Death, he turned his Face to the Wall from those that were about him, and prayed earnestly to God ; who knowing the Sincerity of his Soul, and the Truth of what he alledged,
that

a proper Ground for coming to God. 51

that he had indeed walked before him SERM.
with a perfect Heart, and had done that II.
which was good in his Sight, sent back 
the Prophet again with this gracious Mes-
sage: *I have heard thy Prayer, I have
seen thy Tears: Behold I will heal thee:
On the third Day thou shalt go up unto
the House of the Lord. And I will add
unto thy Days fifteen Years, and I will deli-
ver thee and this City out of the Hand of the
King of Assyria; and I will defend this City
for mine own Sake, and for my Servant
David's Sake.*

THE Truth of this Assertion might
farther be evinced from the Instances of
Cornelius, and other good Men under the
New Testament, whose devout and earn-
est Petitions have been heard and answer-
ed by that God, whose Ears are always
as open to the Prayers of his Servants, as
their most secret Actions are to his All-
seeing Eye. There is not the softest Mur-
mur, or most gentle Whisper of their
Souls that can escape his Observation. His
Holy Spirit first leads and directs them
in those pious and ardent Breathings, and
then conveys them to the Throne of

SERM. Grace, and joyns his powerful Intercession
 II. that they may not ascend in vain, but
 obtain the requested Favour. Let the Petitions be never so numerous, offered up from the Closet Retirement, and from never so distant Parts at one and the same Instant, he is still at Leisure to attend to the very minutest of them, and both able and willing to grant them to the utmost. He hears the Supplications of the godly, and he hears the bitter Curses and Imprecations of the wicked, and will answer them both in the Manner that best befits them, *i. e.* the one by granting the Blessings which they sue for; and the other by pouring out on the Head of such profane Wretches, that Vengeance and Damnation which they are so forward to call down for others. What was alledged by the blind Man whom our Saviour restored to Sight, *that God beareth not Sinners*, is thus far true indeed, that he does not so far hear, as to regard or accept them, but their Prayer is an Abomination to him, instead of a Sacrifice. Not that he is really ignorant of what they say, nor is there a Word in their Tongue, but he
 knoweth

knoweth it altogether. And in like Man-^{SERM.}
ner are we to understand the Words of the ^{II.}
Psalmist, Psal. lxvi. 16. If I regard Ini-
quity with mine Heart, the Lord will not
bear me ; as much as to say, if I venture
to approach him, without a due Prepara-
tion of Heart and Soul, with polluted
Hands and a corrupted Mind, if I do not
first sincerely confess and bewail my Sins,
and form holy Resolutions of Amend-
ment for the Time to come, before I
presume to implore the Mercies I stand in
Need of, my most earnest Intreaties will
be of no Account, I shall be looked upon by
him as an idle Babler, and shall never obtain
any of my Desires. So proper and reason-
able is it always to begin our Prayers
with a Confession of our Sins. For unre-
pented Sin is a certain Bar to God's Fa-
vour, and till that Obstruction be remo-
ved, we may be assured, that whatever
we ask we shall ask in vain. But if we
will first wash our Hands in Innocency,
we may then with Confidence appear be-
fore him, and may depend upon it, that
he will both hear and answer our Pe-
titions. But,

SERM. II. Idly, I AM now to shew, that this is a Property belonging to God alone.

THOU emphatically, and no other, *art a God that bearest Prayer* : I mean, there is no other but God, that can either hear or judge of the Sincerity of internal and mental Prayer. He only understands the Language of the Heart, and the Meaning of that which is yet unuttered. He only can listen to all Supplicants at once, let them be never so disjoined in Place, or let their Wants be never so various and disagreeing. And none but he can so hear, as to be able to answer and relieve them all.

WE Mortals indeed are capable, in some little Measure, of understanding one another's Wants, of receiving Petitions from our Fellow Creatures, and offering our own to them : We are capable too, in some Degree, of relieving one another, and complying with the Requests that are made to us. But this our Power is greatly limited and restrained. We can hearken but to a few Petitioners at a Time, and it is but to a small Part of them, to whose Necessities we are able to apply the proper
Re-

Remedies. We can no otherwise discover what it is they stand in Need of, but by outward Expressions and Significations: Nor does it always happen that we are sufficiently in Humour, or that we have so much Humanity about us, as will incline us to supply those Needs that have been fully represented to us, and which according to the Ability wherewith God has been pleased to prosper us, we are abundantly able to alleviate and make easy.

SOMETIMES too it may so fall out, that even those who have the largest Capacity of doing good, and who withal are ever ready to hear as many as they can, and ever inclinable to grant to as many as they do hear, are hindred from applying their Benevolence where it is most wanted and best deserved, by the Forwardness and Importunity of less worthy Persons, who by crafty Suggestions and false Representations, divert to their own Benefit those Streams of Favour, which were designed to flow in a much better Channel, and fatten on the Spoils of the modest and unheard.

56 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. THESE Inconveniencies and Inequalities
 II. are unavoidable in the Course of human
 Affairs, nor is it possible for the greatest
 Sagacity or sharpest Penetration wholly to
 guard against them. For Men can but
 judge according to the best outward Ap-
 pearances that offer themselves, and the
 best Information they can procure. But as
 those Appearances and that Information
 are not always agreeable to the Nature of
 Things ; hence many Mistakes and Mis-
 understandings arise. When our Rule its
 self becomes thus deceitful, we must of
 Necessity err. But our Comfort is, that
 Error, when it is thus unavoidable, is ne-
 ver sinful.

GOD only is omniscient and unerring.
 It is he alone that cannot be imposed on
 by any deceitful and imperfect Views. He
 clearly discerns between real Merit and
 specious Plausibility. He sees the artful
 Turns and colourable Pretences that are
 given to ill-grounded Requests, the secret
 Springs from whence they proceed, and the
 latent Reserves wherewith they are attended.
 He hears all his Addressers equally, and all
 thoroughly ; they may always be sure of

an easy Access and favourable Audience. **SERM.**
He will so direct and proportion his Gifts, **II.**
that what is bestowed on one shall be no
Detriment to another, and will so order
Events, that no one who makes a due
Application, shall want any Thing that is
fit and convenient for him. To whom
then can we so properly betake ourselves
for the obtaining any of our reasonable De-
sires, as to that Benefactor who is able to
do all Things, to whose Presence we are at
all Times sure to be admitted, and who,
we know, will never reject, nor send us
away empty? *O thou that hearest Prayer,*
unto thee shall all Flesh come. Which
brings me to consider,

III^{dly}, **T H E** Reasonableness and
Force of the Inference drawn from the
Assertion I have been proving. *Because*
he heareth Prayer, therefore shall all Flesh
come unto him. The Probability or Pros-
pect of Success is, next to the Worthiness
of the End we pursue, one of the chief
Things to be considered in all human Ac-
tions. To attempt Things impossible, or
such as are very hardly to be attained, tho'
the Objects in themselves may be well
worth

58 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. worth the possessing, will cause any Man's

II. Discretion to be call'd in Question. To ask a considerable Favour of a Person, in whom one has no Manner of Interest, nor the least Acquaintance with him, and where one is morally assured of meeting with a Refusal, is such a Piece of Conduct as is peculiar to the worthless and the bold, but which no Person of Modesty or Sense will care to venture on. Or let the Thing to be requested be never so just and reasonable, and he of whom we would ask it never so well known to us, yet if we know him to be of a rigid and inflexible Temper, spiteful and envious, churlish and morose, and one who is naturally averse to doing good Offices, and contributing to the Happiness of others, and who takes a Pleasure in denying the most ordinary Favours and Matters of common Civility; this will sufficiently warrant our Backwardness in applying to him, nor ought we to be taxed with being wanting to our selves or to our Friends, if we forbear to ask, where our Hopes of prevailing are so very small.


BUT

BUT then on the other Hand, where SERM.
a very slight Application will be sure to II.
procure us very great Advantages, where
we have a candid and ingenuous Disposition
to deal with, a Lover of Mankind,
and one who delights in being serviceable
and beneficial, when we have no more to
do, but to open our Case to him, and
make him sensible how much it is in his
Power to make us happy and easy, and
have all imaginable Reason to conclude,
that the Request will be as soon granted
as desired; in this Case, we are guilty of
the most inexcusable Folly, and may be
justly looked upon as the wilful Authors of
our own Misery, if we neglect so easy and
obvious a Remedy.

Now this is the Case between our Creator and us. We have not only a Probability, but a Certainty of succeeding in our Petitions to him. There is Nothing that he is not able to give us, and Nothing convenient that he is not willing. He never with-holds his Blessings from us out of Envy or ill Humour. We depend, in all that we seek from him, on no Uncertainty of Temper, we have none of those softer
Hours

60 *The Character of bearing Prayer,*

SERM. Hours to watch, when he is most easy to

II.  be approached, which we are forced to observe with regard to our earthly Benefactors. And yet, stupid and ungrateful as we are, how much more careless and remiss are we in our Carriage toward him, than toward the meanest of those from whom we expect any temporal Advantage ! With how exact an Observance do we attend their Motions, how careful to slip no Opportunity of caressing them, how fearful of doing any thing to disoblige them ! But as for our supreme Lord, on whose Will alone both our present and eternal Welfare depends, with what a cold Indifference do we treat him ! When we have nothing else to do, when we labour under outward Pressures, are bereft of all worldly Comforts, and have no other Resort to fly to, we perhaps betake ourselves for Sanctuary to him. But in the mean time we put him on the petitioning Side, and while we should be courting him to grant us his Benefits, he is in vain courting us to receive them. He calls and invites us, while we are flying from him, and when we should entreat

treat him to be reconciled to us, he earnestly beseeches us to be reconciled to him. SERM.
II.

Is such a Behaviour as this toward one so potent, and to whose Disposal we are so absolutely subject, agreeable to the Maxims of common Policy, or do we act thus inconsiderately in any other Matters, but in the great Concern of our everlasting Salvation? Is it not natural and almost mechanical for us thither to cast our most wistful Looks and passionate Regards from whencesoever our Support and Maintenance comes? If in any Case we are sensible of our own Want and Indigence, does it not of Course prompt us to have Resort to such as we know are best able to supply that Want? Thus our Experience tells us it is in the common Occurrences of Life, the greater the Abundance is, the more needy Followers it will be sure to draw, *and wheresoever the Carcass is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.* When there was Corn no where but in *Egypt*, *Egypt* was the Place of Resort for all that were oppressed with Famine.


SINCE then we know our selves to stand in Need of continual Supplies, both
of

62 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. of temporal and spiritual Blessings, since

II. we have occasion not only for bodily Refreshments from Time to Time, but, which is much more material, we find in our selves a Decay of our spiritual Strength, a Deficiency in every Grace and Virtue, and such a Waste of Spirits in our inward Man, as can only be supplied by that God, who has promised to grant us these and all other Blessings we will pray for, and who we are sure is abundantly able to perform his Promises ; is it not clear, that, for this Reason, we should make our Supplications to him ?

ARE we not poor enough, and sufficiently devoid of Grace, to perceive we stand in Need of such Assistance ? Or are we so blind, so ill instructed, and unacquainted with our own Privilege, as not to know where this Assistance is to be had, and to whom we must apply our selves for it ? Or knowing all this, and that upon our due Application we may find Help and Relief, nay, not only that, but the most enlivening Joy and Comfort, are we yet so wilfully stubborn and regardless of our own Happiness, as not to
fly

fly to him for Succour, and beg to have SERM.
all our inward Breaches repaired by the II.
powerful Infusion of Divine Grace, and 
the healing Virtue of his sanctifying Spirit ?

How natural should it be for every one who reflects on his dependent Condition, and how unable he is to subsist one single Moment without the repeated Marks of Divine Goodness, to say, with the Holy Psalmist, *Unto thee lift I up mine Eyes, O thou that dwellest in the Heavens. Behold, as the Eyes of Servants look unto the Hand of their Masters, and as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hand of her Mistress, so our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have Mercy upon us !*

I HAVE shown you the Justness of the Inference or Conclusion in my Text, drawn from God's Readiness to hear and Willingness to save, that therefore *all Flesh should come* (and may they all be so wise as to come) in a suppliant Manner, unto him. Let us now in the

IVth and last Place, Consider this Argument by way of Reverse, and see how unreasonable and vain a Thing it is, to
come

64 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. come unto any Being, *i. e.* to call unto

II. any Being for Help or Succour, that cannot hear our Prayer. As the Prospect of Success is a very proper Inducement to any Enterprize, (as I before observed to you) and goes a great Way toward denominating it wise and rational, and well-grounded, so on the contrary, the engaging in such Methods of Action as can serve to no Purpose, and where their Labour is sure, or at least very likely to miscarry, most deservedly exposes such Undertakers to the Imputation of Vanity and Folly. And there is no greater Instance of such vain and fruitless Labour, than praying to those who can neither hear, nor help us, if they could hear.

SUCH was the Worship of the old Heathen Idolaters, which we find so often exposed in the Book of Psalms and in the Prophets. *They have no Knowledge,* says God himself by the Mouth of *Isaiab,* *they have no Knowledge, that set up the Wood of their graven Image, and pray unto a God that cannot save.* How strangely were Men infatuated, and how extravagant a Project was it, to worship Creatures

tures of their making instead of their

SERM.

Creator, to pay Divine Honours to a Piece

II.

of Wood or Stone, in Confidence of Fa-



vour and Assistance from them, to pray

for Life to Things Inanimate, and for

Strength to that, which they see is un-

able to support it self? How well does the

Psalmist observe, that they who make such

Idols, are like unto them, and so are all they

that put their Trust in them, i. e. they who

could have so little Sense as to persuade

themselves that the Work of their own

Hands had any real Power to bestow on

them any Benefit, or preserve them from

any Danger, were as stupid and void of

Reason as the very Image they adored.

Such Worshippers, with those of *Baal*,

might cry aloud from Morning until Eve-

ning, saying, *O. Baal, bear us*, they might

cut themselves, after their Manner, with

Knives and Lancets, or torment themselves

after any other Manner that mistaken Su-

perstition has invented; but there would

be neither Voice, nor any to answer, nor

any that regardeth. Nor did they find it

more availing to pay their Adoration to

the Sun or Moon, or Planets, or any of

the Host of Heaven, nor to any remark-

able

SERM. able Person deceas'd, whom ignorant Zeal
 II. or corrupt Flattery, or some worse Cause,
 had recommended to the deluded World
 under the Title and Character of a God.

BUT blessed be God, Mens Eyes are at this Time better opened, they have cast off the Belief of those imaginary Powers, and are generally agreed in acknowledging the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. And yet it were to be wished, that all who profess to believe the Unity of the Godhead, were equally zealous in asserting his undoubted Rights and Properties ; that they would not give his Honour to another, nor impart that Adoration that is due to him, and to him alone, to any created Being.

BUT herein the Church of *Rome* is notoriously to blame, which so far retains the Leaven of *Heathen Rome*, as to injoin her Members, under Pain of Damnation, to adore and pray to departed Saints and Angels, in direct Opposition to our blessed Saviour's Doctrine, where he quotes a Passage of the *Old Testament*, and makes it a Command of the *New* by his Repetition of it. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy*

thy God, and him only shalt thou serve: SERM.

And to that of St. Paul, *Let no Man be-* II.

guile you of your Reward, in a voluntary Humility, and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those Things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly Mind.

And we read that St. John, when he would have worshipp'd the Angel that shew'd him the Things he has recorded in his *Revelations*, was forbid by him to do it, and required to direct his Adoration to none but the Almighty. *And when I had heard and seen,* says he, *I fell down to worship before the Feet of the Angel, which shew'd me these Things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy Fellow-Servant, and of thy Brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the Sayings of this Book. Worship God.*

Much might be said to shew how injurious this Practice is to God, how it robs him of his Honour, and argues a Distrust of his Goodness and All-sufficiency, and of the Efficacy of our Saviour's Mediation, whilst they dare not trust to that alone, but seek out other Intercessors, as if it were to strengthen their Interest with God, and add a greater

68 *The Character of bearing Prayer,*

SERM. Weight to that which he urges in their
II. Behalf.

~ BUT setting aside the Unlawfulness of the Thing, it will be more to my present Purpose to consider, how insignificant and vain it is, and how little Service it can do us. We are not sure they hear us, but we are sure we can be heard without them, and that God can understand our Thoughts, without the Assistance of any created Substance. Why then should we go out of our Way in praying to them to pray for us, when we may apply ourselves, and are encouraged so to do, immediately to God? Nor are we any where in Scripture exhorted to approach him through any other Mediator but his beloved Son. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you,* are his own Words. He does not say, *Whatsoever you shall desire such a Saint or such an Angel to ask the Father, shall be granted.* As to the holy Angels, we have Reason indeed to conclude that they are not wholly unacquainted with human Affairs. We are told they are ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for those that shall be

bc

a proper Ground for coming to God. 69

be Heirs of Salvation. We know they SERM.
have frequently been employed in the De- II.
livery of Messages from God to Man, and
we have good Authority to believe that
they are often set as a Guard about good
Men, to deliver them from Harm, and
watch for their Preservation. But it is
much more certain, that as they are but
finite Beings, they cannot be every where
present at one and the same Time, nor
have we any Rule whereby we can judge
when any one of them is present with us ;
we know not which of them it is, by what
Name he is called, to what Rank or Or-
der of Angels he belongs, how long he
makes his Abode with us, or whether he
attends us in all our Motions, whether we
are accompanied by one as our constant and
standing Guardian, or whether they re-
lieve one another, and take care of us by
Succession ; whether the same Person is
under the Inspection of different Angels,
or the same Angel has the Tuition of diffe-
rent Persons. These are Points of which
we are wholly ignorant, and of which we
have no possible Means of being informed,
since the Scripture is silent about them :

70 *The Character of hearing Prayer,*

SERM. And consequently under this Uncertainty,
II. if we pray to Angels, we pray to we
know not whom, and misplace our De-
votion that might be much better employ-
ed, in representing our Wants there, from
whence only they can be supplied a short-
er and a nearer Way.

BUT then as touching the Saints, *i. e.*
those holy Persons that have departed in
the Faith, our Uncertainty is yet greater,
and the Invocation of them more prepos-
terous. They are supposed to be in Hea-
ven, and can be no otherwise privy to our
State, but as God is pleased to impart it to
them; they know it not to be sure by im-
mediate Intuition, for then they would be
omniscient, like God. And by Conse-
quence they cannot know when we pray
to them but by Communication from God.
And is it reasonable to suppose that God
Almighty is to acquaint the *Virgin Mary*,
or *St. Peter*, or *St. Paul*, that such a Chri-
stian in such a Place, or such a Congrega-
tion of Christians desires one of them to
intercede with himself in their Behalf?


WHETHER or no *the Souls of the*
Faithful after they are delivered from the
Bur-

a proper Ground for coming to God. 71

Burden of the Flesh, have any Knowledge SERM.
at all of what we do below, has been al- II.
ways a Matter of Dispute, it has been
doubted by some, and denied by others,
and is like to be fully determined by none,
till the militant and triumphant Church
shall be united, and that will not be till
the general Resurrection. In the mean
Time, though we may think the affirma-
tive Side of the Question the more pro-
bable, and see better Reasons to incline us
to believe that they do interest themselves
in our Affairs, than that they are wholly
unconcerned about us, yet as we have no
Assurance that they can hear the Address-
es we make to them, and as we have no
Need of such Mediators to make our Re-
quests known to God, this can be no suf-
ficient Ground either to authorize or per-
suade us to offer up our Supplications to
them.

I SPEAK this even on a Supposal that
those to whom we address ourselves, are
real Saints, and certainly among the Num-
ber of the blessed, which is more than we
can absolutely pronounce of any others
but those whose Names are recorded in

SERM. the Book of Life. As for the most seem-

II.  ingly innocent and righteous Persons besides, we can but charitably suppose them to be in Heaven, but can have no Security that they are so. And therefore, considering how we Men are liable to be deceived in our Judgment of one another, and how often a counterfeit Devotion has passed upon the World, how dangerous as well as absurd a Thing is it, to pray to one as a Saint in Heaven, who for ought we know may be tormented in Hell? And I cannot but add, that there are too many Saints of the Pope's making, who, we have reason to fear, have had no better a Portion assign'd them. And, as we hope for a better, let us be tender of God's Prerogative, and forbear to give the Honours that are peculiar to him, to any created Being. *Let us render to God, the Things that are God's*, and neither neglect to call upon him for Help, nor betake ourselves to any other.

To that eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, &c.



S E R M O N III.

The Duty of Publick Prayer, and
Excellency of the *English* Liturgy.



ROM. xii. 12.

— *continuing instant in Prayer.*



AMONG many other necessary SERM.
and useful Rules to be observed III.
by every good Christian in the
Conduct of his Life and Man-
ners, the Apostle lays down this of *conti-*
nuing in Prayer, and that *instantly*, or,
as he elsewhere expresses it, *without ceas-*
ing, as a most important and indispenfable
Duty; intending by those Expressions of
instant and *incessant Prayer*, not that Men
should give themselves up so entirely to
Devotion,

SERM. Devotion, as wholly to neglect all the other

III. Offices and Duties of Life, and render themselves useleſs and unſerviceable to the Community whereof they are Members, or to abandon all their Civil, Natural, and Political Engagements. But that they ſhould conſtantly retain a Spirit of Devotion, and preſerve an habitual Readineſs of applying themſelves to the Throne of Grace on every emergent Occaſion: That they ſhould diligently obſerve the ſtated Times both of publick and private Prayer: That they ſhould poſſeſs themſelves with a pious and affectionate Senſe of God's Power and Willingneſs to help them: That they ſhould look upon Him as the Sovereign Author of every good and perfect Gift, the ſupreme Diſpoſer of their Fate, and the ſole Director of all Events that befall them, whether they come as Bleſſings or as Punishments: That they ſhould receive Good at His Hands with a ſincere and humble Gratitude, and Evil with a quiet and patient Submiſſion: That they ſhould always be ready furniſhed with pathetic and devout Ejaculations, fit to expreſs their moſt hearty Praise and Thanks for the
Mercies

Mercies he bestows on them, their modest SERM.
Resignation to his Will under those Aff- III.
lictions, wherewith he is pleased to visit
them, either for the Exercise of their Pa-
tience, or as a Chastisement for their Sins,
such as are fit for the imploring in all their
Straits and Pressures His Divine Favour
and Protection, and the powerful Assis-
tances of His preventing and enlivening
Grace, as also for the deprecating His
Wrath and Vengeance, the hiding the
Light of his Countenance from them, and
finally with-drawing His Holy Spirit.

ALTHOUGH then we are not required
to spend our whole Lives in one continued
Series of actual Prayer, without any In-
termission ; yet the Habit of Prayer must
never cease. Though the Fire of Devoti-
on need not always blaze out, though
it may be covered and concealed at pro-
per Seasons ; yet must it never be totally
extinguished : The Embers at least must
be always glowing, and in a constant Rea-
diness to be blown up into a Flame, as
Opportunity shall offer, and Need require.

THOUGH a good Christian may be con-
versant in other Places, besides the Closet
and

SERM. and the Church, and may without any
 III. Offence to God, and without robbing him
 of his Honour, be occupied about his law-
 ful Occasions, or amuse himself in harm-
 less and innocent Diversions; yet even in
 the midst of Business or Recreations, he
 may find room for pious Thoughts, and
 a grateful Reflection on the Goodness of
 that God, to whose kind Indulgence he
 is indebted for the Means and Opportu-
 nities that are afforded him of performing
 either.

THE Devotion of the best inclined and
 most religious Persons would by Degrees
 begin to flag and tire, if it were bound
 without any Relaxation to keep up con-
 stantly to the highest Pitch, and were not
 allowed to let it self down in order to re-
 cover fresh Strength and Vigour. But
 though it is not obliged to be always on
 the Wing, it must ever be prepared for a
 new Flight, and, like a watchful Centinel,
 not only diligently observe the set Times
 of Duty, but be ready to take the first
 Alarm, in Case of any sudden and extra-
 ordinary Call.

IN this Sense it is the Duty of every SERM.
Christian, according to the Advice of our III.
Apostle in my Text, to *continue instant in*
Prayer: to the constant and sincere Ex-
ercise whereof, that I may the more ef-
fectually incite you, I shall endeavour to
make good the following Propositions.

First, That Prayer in general is both
our indispensable Duty, and our in-
estimable Privilege.

Secondly, That the publick Invocation
of God in Religious Assemblies, is an
acceptable and requisite Service.

Thirdly, That it is not only lawful, but
the most expedient Manner of cele-
brating such publick Worship, when
we call upon God in a set Form of
Prayer.

Fourthly, That the Form prescribed in
the Liturgy of the Church of *Eng-
land*, is as wise and judicious, as full
and comprehensive, as inoffensive and
unexceptionable a Form, as ever any
Church was blest with, since the best
and earliest Ages of Christianity.

I SHALL

SERM. I SHALL say little at this Time of our
 III. Obligation to private Prayer in particular,
 which I may take another Occasion of enlarging on; as also of the several Parts whereof it consists, the Qualifications necessary for a true Supplicant, and the Rules to be observed in the Discharge of that Duty. The Points I have already proposed being more proper and natural for me to insist on at this Time, as a Confirmation of the Willingness of that Subscription and Declaration of Conformity to the Use of the Liturgy, which I have lately been called to make, in Respect of the Station I hold here, of that Assent and Consent to the Book of *Common Prayer*, which I have been required by lawful Authority openly and publickly to declare.

I BEGIN then with my first Assertion, That Prayer in general is both our indispensable Duty, and our inestimable Privilege.

THE next Step to our acknowledging the Existence of a God, is our worshipping and adoring him, and seeking to him for those Necessaries which we are sensible we want, and he alone can give us.

THERE

THERE have been few who believed any SERM.
Thing of a divine Being, who have not III.
carried their Religion thus far. This Na-
ture itself could teach the Heathens who
were guided by no other Light, and in
vain would it have taught them that there
was a Deity, if it had not been in Order
to the imploring his Assistance: they found
their Condition was frail and impotent,
that they laboured under many Defects
and Difabilities, which they could not pos-
sibly remedy by all the Force and Power
of their natural Faculties; and perceiving
there was an All-wise and All-sufficient
Being, who both knew their Infirmities,
and was able to relieve them; the Case
was very obvious, that the Way to obtain
that Relief, must be by humbly petition-
ing for it. It was a plain Indication to
them that the great Dispenser of Blessings,
by sometimes stopping his Hand, and with-
holding the Things they stood in Need of,
and at other Whiles pouring them out in
great Abundance, had some Regard to the
Behaviour of those that depended on him,
that something was to be done by them
in Order to procure them, and they could
think

80 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. think of no Expedient so proper and natural, as sueing and entreating for those Favours as a free and voluntary Gift, for which they were sensibly convinced they were able to make no Manner of Requitall to an infinitely perfect Being, who stood in no Need of their Service, and could receive no Benefit from any Thing they could offer him.

III.

THUS far I say the very Heathens themselves were convinced of the Obligation to Prayer. But we Christians have much higher Demonstrations of it, both from the bright and memorable Patterns that have been set us by the most renowned Assertors of the Faith we profess, whose Flights of Devotion and elevated Piety are recorded to their eternal Honour in the sacred Writings; and also from many positive Precepts and Injunctions, where we are not only required to pray instantly and incessantly, *and without Fainting*, but moreover *are taught how to pray*. Where it is imposed on us as a Condition of receiving, that we first ask, and where we see the happy Effects of such asking exemplified in divers Instances, and those Instances urged

urged as an Encouragement to the Duty, as when St. James tells us, *that Elias was a Man of like Infirmities with ourselves, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it did not rain for the Space of Three Years and six Months:* who also makes this general Observation, that the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.

SERM.
III.

I MIGHT transcribe a greater Part of the Scripture than would fill this Discourse, should I mention all the Directions and Enforcements to this Duty. But I shall add but one more for all the rest, and that is the Practice of our blessed Saviour, who we know, prayed frequently and fervently to his Father: and he that after such an Example can think himself absolved from the Necessity of praying, must persuade himself that he has fewer Frailties and Infirmities, or greater Strength and Sufficiency than the blessed and immaculate Son of God.

BUT suppose now that Prayer were not regarded of us as a Duty, were it only permitted and indulged to us, we have all imaginable Reason to embrace it as our highest Privilege.

82 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. FOR Men in the most distressed and miserable Condition, naked and destitute of all
III. Comfort, full of Wants and Necessities, and, which is worst of all, burden'd with a heavy Load of Guilt, from which they are unable to free themselves, and which unless it be taken off must unavoidably sink them to the bottomless Pit; for such Men I say to be told of a plain and easy Remedy, by which they may free themselves from all their Misery, and be advanced to a State of Joy and Happiness, one would think should be no unwelcome News, and that they should need but little Persuasion to accept of the Deliverance that is offered them.

AND yet such a Remedy is Prayer, and this is offered to every Man as a sure Expedient, let his spiritual or temporal Wants be never so great and pressing. We have our Saviour's own Word for it, *that whatever we ask the Father in his Name, he will give us.*

HEREBY we are admitted to the Honour of holding an Intercourse with God himself, who vouchsafes to receive us into his Presence, allows us to open our Wants
to

to him, and attentively listens to our Sup-
plications : he suffers us to challenge the
Performance of his Promises, and to urge
the gracious Offers he has made to re-
penting Sinners.

SERM.
III.
~~~~~

IN a Word, this is so honourable, and may be made so delightful a Task, that there needs no Force or Compulsion to it, were it not that some Men are so wilfully stiff-necked and perverse, that as they are fond of many Things, which are really unpleasent and disagreeable, as well as wicked, merely because they are forbidden ; so on the other Hand, they take up an unreasonable Aversion to Prayer, though exceedingly pleasent and full of Joy and Consolation in itself, for no other Cause but because it is a Duty.

I AM now to prove, in the

*Second Place*, That the publick Invocation of God in religious Assemblies, is an acceptable and requisite Service.

OUR Saviour has sufficiently testified his good liking of such Worship, by declaring, *that wherever two or three are gathered together in his Name, there is he in the midst*

84 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. of them, and the more are assembled, the

III. greater Delight does he take in them, and  
the more is he inclined to grant those Requests, which are jointly offered by a great Number of devout and pious Souls. So many unanimous Petitioners agreeing in the same Desires, and breathing out the same Wishes, do, as it were, offer a Sort of pleasing Violence to the Kingdom of Heaven, and such violent Men take it by the Force of Prayer.

It was when the Apostles were assembled together, and making their common Supplications, while they were all with one Accord in one Place, that the Holy Ghost fell on them. And the same divine Spirit rested on 3000 at a Time, who had formed themselves into a Congregation, and were listning to *St. Peter*.

AND we meet with a remarkable Instance of our Saviour's Zeal against such as profaned the Temple, where such Congregations were appointed to be held, when he urged a Passage out of the Old Testament, where God's House is peculiarly stiled *the House of Prayer*, in Justification of his Proceeding, when he took upon  
him

him to drive out from it, such as were so irreverent as to turn it into a Market or an Exchange.

SERM.  
III.  


Now although there were other religious Offices to be performed in the Temple, such as sacrificing, reading, and expounding the Law, &c. yet we may learn from that signal Elogy that is here given to publick Prayer, that that is to be esteem'd the chief and principal Part of the divine Worship, for the Performance whereof in a more convenient and decent Manner, the Temple, and for the same Reason our Christian Churches, were peculiarly erected, and separated from profane Uses, that holy and devout Persons might know whither to resort, like Soldiers to their Standard, to perform their common Duty, and represent their common Wants.

WHAT a high Reverence and Value does Holy *David* express for the House of God, and what an ardent Desire that his Condition would allow him to make his constant Abode there, and never depart from it, where he could be contented even with the humble Office of a Door-keeper! and, in the *New Testament* too, we

86 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*

SERM. have the Practice both of our Saviour and  
III. his Disciples, who we read after his Ascension were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God. And the Apostle gives it as an exprefs Charge, that Christians should not forsake the assembling themselves together, and at the same Time passës a Censure on those that did so.

Now that the Practice of the Church was agreeable to this Precept, we have Proofs enough both from Scripture and Antiquity. We find the Apostles directing what should be done in their Assemblies, and reprovng what was done amiss there, prescribing Rules for their Behaviour, and the Exercise of their several Gifts, forbidding Women to teach, and those who might lawfully officiate to pray in an unknown Tongue; and where some particular Cases might happen, which were not sufficiently provided for, requiring them to observe these general Instructions, that every Thing should be done to edifying, with Decency and in Order.

FROM these and many other Proofs it is very clear and indisputable, that not only in the *Jewish*, but *Christian* Church,  
ever



ever since the first Foundation of it, God SERM.  
has been worshipped in Religious Assem- III.  
blies. And we may be largely convinced  
by the Writings of the old Apologists and  
Ecclesiastical Historians, how indefatigably  
zealous the primitive Christians were in  
the Celebration of this Duty ; insomuch  
that when they laboured under the severest  
Persecutions, and were forbid to meet  
together, under Pain of the most exquisite  
Torture, no Suffering could discourage,  
no Terrors affright them from it.

WHEN they were so narrowly watched,  
that it was impracticable to be done  
by Day, they would repair by Night to  
some appointed Place, where they might  
join their united Prayers to God, that he  
would commiserate the suffering Estate of  
his Church, and either release them from  
those Oppressions under which they groaned,  
if it should be his good Pleasure, or  
else enable them with Courage and Con-  
stancy to undergo the fiery Trial, and sus-  
tain the utmost Torments that could be  
inflicted on them, rather than deny the  
Faith, and apostatize from that holy Pro-  
fession in which they had engaged them-  
selves.

SERM. selves. Ever, before they parted, commemorating the Death and Passion of their gracious Redeemer, according to his own most holy Institution.

III.

WE have heard much of a like Zeal and Firmness in our own Times among the persecuted Protestants in a neighbouring Country, who would run all Hazards, rather than lose an Opportunity of meeting with others of the same Persuasion, and the same pious Disposition, to worship God after their own Manner.

AND indeed it is too sad a Truth, that the Members of an oppressed and persecuted Church, have at all Times been more eager and forward to embrace all possible Opportunities of assembling themselves together for the Performance of religious Acts, notwithstanding all the Dangers they were exposed to, than those who may do it with Ease and Safety; who have a settled Ministry, fixed Hours, open Churches, and not only the Allowance, but the Command of the Civil Power to repair thither.

THE Case is but too visible, how a hundred lazy Pretences of Business or Company,

pany, or feigned Indispositions, or even a little Wet or Cold, will serve to keep away the one; whilst Storms and Tempests, Fire and Sword, Racks and Wheels, were all too little to deter the other.

SERM.  
III.

HAVING observed thus much concerning publick Prayer, I pass on to my

*Third Proposition*, viz. That it is not only lawful, but the most expedient Manner of celebrating such publick Worship, when we call upon God in a set Form of Prayer.

IF there were any Thing in a Form of Prayer that was simply evil, there would not be so many Forms prescribed in the *Old Testament*, as we meet with there, among which we may reckon the whole Book of *Psalms*, which were appointed to be sung in the publick Service, and composed for that very Use, as the Titles of many of them set forth; nor would our Saviour himself have prayed by a Form, as he evidently did, when he prayed three several Times in the same Words. Nay, on the Cross it self he prayed by a Form, when he cried in the very Words of the  
Twenty-

SERM. say, they can pray with more Understand-  
 III. ing, and be better assured that they perform an acceptable Service, than when both the Matter and Expression are entirely new, and sometimes it is to be feared, such as neither the one would have uttered upon mature Deliberation, nor the other have said *Amen* to, if they had Time to recollect themselves, and consider what improper Things had been requested in their Name, or how irreverently and over-familiarly they had made their Addresses to Almighty God, with other Abuses of the like Nature.

AND as one that trusts to unstudied arbitrary Prayer, may be sometimes surprized into an unwarrantable Expression; so (which is a more frequent Case) he may omit many Things which were proper, nay highly necessary to be asked, whilst he enlarges with great Zeal and Fervency on others of less Moment.

BUT both these Inconveniencies are avoided by following a prescribed and well-considered Form, where we are sure to desire nothing but what is fit and convenient, and that in the most reverent and  
 decent

decent Terms, nor to omit any Thing that is so. SERM.  
III.

WHEN they object that in the Use of set Forms, the Mind is so fastened to the Words, that it cannot be affected with the Sense ; this may with much better Reason be retorted upon themselves. For, as to the Minister, let any one judge, whose Attention is most taken up with the Words, he that has Expressions to invent, and is busied in turning over his Imagination to seek for new Phrases, or he that only pronounces what is well invented already. And as for our People, who expect no Novelties, but a Repetition of the same Prayers which they familiarly know and understand, and which they have often successfully put up ; they have the more Leisure to affect themselves with the meaning of them, to raise their Thoughts, and join their Hearts and Souls to every Petition, and to expatiate and enlarge themselves in Holy Desires and Meditations, which is the Life and Soul of Prayer.

OH but these Prayers, they cry, must grow flat and insipid, and lose all their Force and Energy by our constant and daily

SERM. daily Iteration of them. The People will

III. by Degrees be cloyed, and retain no Taste or Relish of them, when they hear and repeat nothing but the same Things they have heard and repeated a Thousand Times before.

BUT do we come together to please Men, or God? And can we think that He will be the better pleased for our Variety of Expression? Do we not stand in need of the same Blessings to Day as we did Yesterday? And if so, why may we not beg them in the same Terms?

BUT even with Regard to the People, there is no Reason to fear that any truly pious Soul will be distasted, or grow sick and weary of a well-composed Form of Prayer; but on the contrary will both like it the better, and edify the more by it, the longer he has used it.

THERE are Multitudes of good and holy Persons, who can testify this from their own Experience; and if there are any who are less warmly affected, who find their Devotions cool and flatten, for want of a more pleasing Variety; the Fault is not in the Prayers, but in the Indisposition

tion

tion of their own Hearts ; it is because SERM. they run them over as Words of Course, III. without considering the Sense, and then it is no Wonder if they do not edify.

BUT *2dly*, It was before objected, that set Forms of Prayer cannot so well be adapted to the several Occasions that may arise, as Extempore Prayer.

BUT to this I answer, That all the various Cases that may attend particular Persons, cannot be specified at large, nor are they so fit to be represented in the Church, which can only pray for them in general Terms : And in this Respect there is the same Incapacity of providing for them, whether the Congregation uses a Form, or no.

AND as for such unexpected Events as may befall the Church or Nation in general, they may be (and are in our Liturgy) provided for by a Collection of occasional Prayers, to be applied or omitted as Reason or Necessity requires.

*3dly*, ANOTHER Part of the Objection against set Forms was, That it is a stinting and limiting the Spirit. But I have shewed before, that a Man who prays by a  
Form

SERM. Form, may earnestly and devoutly intend  
 III. the Matter of what he prays for, that he  
 may have a fervent Zeal, enflamed Affec-  
 tions, eager Desires, and a Delight in the  
 Exercise of it, and that is the true Spirit  
 of Prayer.

FAR be it from me to deny, that the  
 Holy Spirit of God is always ready to  
 further the good Motions and Tendencies  
 of every sincere and godly Christian ; or  
 that he affords a more peculiar Assistance  
 to those who are making their Supplica-  
 tions to God, and pouring out their Souls  
 to him.

BUT then it is as certain, that he assists  
 them only by his ordinary Operations, and  
 not by those extraordinary and miraculous  
 ones, which he exerted in the Apostles  
 Days, the Continuance whereof was nei-  
 ther promised to the Church, nor is ne-  
 cessary for it, since its firm Establishment,  
 and the Delivery of a written Rule, indi-  
 cated by that very Spirit.

THE Help then we may expect from  
 him in Prayer, is not the Gift of Utte-  
 rance or Elocution, Fluency of Speech, or  
 Force of Expression, but a Quickning of  
 our



our Affections, stirring up of our Graces, fixing our Attention, and exciting in us such a flagrant Zeal and Earnestness, as may make our Devotions acceptable to God.

SERM.

III.

Now these Operations are not at all restrained or limited by a Form ; there is at least the same Room for the Spirit to exert it self, and it may act on the Soul with as vigorous an Influence, when the Prayers are ready prepared to our Hand, as when they are the Effect of a sudden Heat, and flow from extempore Conceptions.

IN short, if there be any Force in the Objection of our stinting the Spirit, when we confine ourselves to a Form, and not suffering him to guide us in the Matter and Manner of our Prayers, it must be grounded on this Principle : That whoever prays extempore, prays by the immediate Direction of the Spirit, *i. e.* by divine Inspiration ; and consequently that such Prayers are as true and authentick as the Scripture itself.

BUT will any one venture to assert this, who knows any thing of the Imperfecti-

SERM. ons, the Improperities, and (to say no  
 III. worse) the little Levities, with which such  
 Prayers are sometimes chargeable; and who farther considers that the different Sects who pretend to be thus gifted, do frequently take Occasion, in those Prayers, each of them to vent their own peculiar Notions, which are as opposite to each other, as all of them are to those of the established Church? And can any one believe that the Spirit of Truth itself is the Author and Inditer of such Contradictions?

I SHALL conclude this Head with the remarkable Concession of Mr. *Baxter*, a learned Divine of their own.

“ Is it not, says he, a high Degree of  
 “ Pride, to conclude, that almost all Chri-  
 “ stian Churches in the World, for these  
 “ 1300 (he might have said upward of  
 “ 1600) Years at least unto this Day, have  
 “ offered such Worship to God, as that  
 “ you are obliged to avoid it? and that  
 “ almost all the Catholick Churches on  
 “ Earth at this Day, are below your Com-  
 “ munion for using Forms? And that  
 “ even *Calvin* (and others whom he  
 “ names,)

“ names), and the old Non-conformists, SERM.  
“ were unworthy your Communion? III.

Having said thus much in Justification  
of Forms of Prayer in general, I now pro-  
ceed to my

*Fourth and Last Proposition:* That the  
Form prescribed in the Liturgy of the  
Church of *England*, is as wise and judici-  
ous, as full and comprehensive, as inoffen-  
sive and unexceptionable a Form as ever  
any Church was blest with since the best  
and earliest Ages of Christianity.

It cannot be expected that in the little  
Remainder of my Discourse, I should run  
through all the several Offices of the Litu-  
rgy, and shew the peculiar Beauty and Ex-  
cellence of each of them : Much less that  
I should set myself to vindicate it from every  
Cavil that unreasonable Men have raised  
against it.

THERE can be nothing so well and  
commendably devised, to which some Ex-  
ception may not be taken by those who  
are resolved to find Fault. Nor is there  
any one Office, nay scarce a Sentence of

100 *The Duty of publick Prayer, and*  
SERM. the Common Prayer that has escaped the  
III. Censure of such Men.

IT would hardly be believed by the devout Attendants on that Service, if the Objections were not too often and publickly urged, that many Parts of it which they have in the highest Veneration, and with which they feel themselves most sensibly affected, should prove an Offence to others, and keep them from our Communion.

'Tis scarce credible that any should quarrel with us for confessing to God that there is no Health in us : for praying against sudden Death : for begging of Christ that he would deliver us by the Mystery of his Holy Incarnation, with the other patheticall Motives in that and the following Suffrage of the *Litany* : for beseeching him that he would give to all Nations, Unity, Peace, and Concord ; for declaring that with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven we laud and magnify his glorious Name : for begging of God that he would vouchsafe to give us those Things for the Worthiness of Christ, which for our own Unworthiness we dare

dare not, and for our Blindness we cannot ask.

SERM.  
III.  


I SHALL easily be excused from returning any Answer to these and the like Exceptions against particular Passages.

HOWEVER, before I go on to speak of the Beauties, I shall stay to wipe off some Stains, that seem to affect the main Bulk of the Liturgy. as,

I. THEY object that the greatest Part of it is taken out of the *Popish Mass-Book*. And what if it be so? Was not the *Mass-Book* itself in a great Measure collected from the purest ancient Liturgies that were preserved in the Church from the Apostolical Times? But as Popery prevailed, those excellent Forms were disguised and defaced by being intermixed with many corrupt and idolatrous Petitions, and clogged with an intolerable Burden of needless Ceremonies.

BUT our Liturgy, as it is now reformed, is restored to its primitive Splendor, those Abuses are taken away, and there is nothing remains that can be thought either Useless or Superstitious.

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SERM. AND what then can we desire more?

III. shall we make no Distinction between what is profitable and edifying, and that which is scandalous and profane? Or must we cast away the one for the Sake of the other? We have left the Church of *Rome* so far as it was erroneous and corrupt, but where we could lawfully and usefully conform to it, we did so. And it were well if all Christians would do the same, for the Sake of Peace and Unity.

UPON the whole then, since we have weeded up the Tares, and cast away the Chaff, we are very unjustly censured for gathering the Wheat into our Garners.

2. THEY find Fault that our Service is divided into so many short Collects, which they think would be more edifying, if it were one continued Prayer. Whereas there may be much better Reasons given for the Reverse of that Opinion. As that the Minds of the Congregation may be kept more intent, and be less subject to Distractions, when they frequently break off, and are called upon to answer; than when they bear no Part in the Service till it is all concluded. That the frequent Invo-  
cation



cation of God by some fresh Attribute, at SERM.  
the Beginning of every Prayer, is a great III.  
Help to Devotion, and puts us still in  
Remembrance in whose Presence we are.  
And that the frequent urging the Merits  
and Mediation of Christ, as we do in the  
End of each Collect, is the surest Way of  
obtaining what we ask ; since whatever is  
granted us, must be for the Sake of those  
Merits, and by the Virtue of that Inter-  
cession.


3. Another Objection, near of Kin to  
the former, (and the last I shall mention)  
is this ; they say it is disorderly for the  
People to respond, or to repeat any Part of  
the Service after the Minister, and that it  
is an Intrenchment on his Office, who  
is appointed to speak for the People.

In Answer to which it may be said, that  
such Responsals are very ancient ; that the  
People are directed in the Scripture to say  
*Amen*, and are no where forbid to say  
more ; that Psalms and Hymns and Spirit-  
ual Songs are evidently composed for the  
Use of the whole Congregation ; and that  
the joining in such Praises is in Imitation  
of the angelick Choir above ; that in the

SERM. Confession of Sins, it is very proper for all  
 III. and every Person unanimously to express  
 the Sense they have of their own Failings ;  
 and that although it is the peculiar Office  
 of the Minister to lead and invite them to  
 pray, yet there is no Reason against, and a  
 great many for their following and saying  
 after him in some Parts of the Service.

THERE is one Consideration more in  
 Reference to this Subject, which the Place  
 itself, where I am now treating of it, does  
 naturally suggest to me, and that is, the  
 Manner of performing Divine Service  
 in this and other Collegiate and Cathed-  
 ral Churches, which, because it is cele-  
 brated with Musick, has for that Reason  
 been objected to us, not only as unwar-  
 rantable and superstitious, but as a Vari-  
 ation from our Rule, and a Breach of that  
 Uniformity among ourselves, which we  
 require of others, and for Default of which  
 we tax them as Schismatical.

BUT why Superstitious? What, because  
 the *Romish* Mass is sung, and whatsoever  
 resembles their Practice, must necessarily  
 be, as such, erroneous and superstitious?  
 But if this Rule were to determine us, we  
 must

must not call upon God, we must not SERM.  
adore the Trinity, we must not pray, nor III.  
preach, nor even observe the Command-  
ments; for all these Things the Papiſts do,   
or pretend to do, as well as we.

How foul a Reflection do theſe Objec-  
tors caſt on Holy *David* himſelf, and the  
other Compoſers of the Book of *Pſalms*,  
which (as I obſerved before) were com-  
poſed for the Uſe of the whole Congrega-  
tion, and were not only ſung, but accom-  
panied with muſical Inſtruments of various  
Kinds, as appears from many Paſſages of  
the *Pſalms* themſelves, where the Aſſiſt-  
ance of ſuch Inſtruments is called for! Shall  
we ſuppoſe then the devout and inſpired  
*Pſalmiſt*, when he ordered the Trumpet  
to be blown up, to have required the  
founding an Alarm to Superſtition?

NAY, ſhall we caſt the ſame Imputa-  
tion even on our bleſſed Lord, when he  
ſung an Hymn with his Diſciples, or when  
he worſhiped in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*?  
Inſtead of which, if he had thought Church  
Muſick as great an Abomination, as ſome  
who in modern Times have born his  
Name, may we not well preſume, that,  
in

SERM. in the Zeal of his Heart for the Purity of  
 III. that Temple, he would have drove out  
 the Singers and Musicians, as greater Pro-  
 faners of his Father's House, as those who  
 had made it less a House of Prayer, and  
 more a Den of Thieves than the Money-  
 Changers and Sellers of Doves.

NOR can any thing be more frivolous  
 than what is alledged, that this is a Breach  
 of our Rule, and contrary to Uniformity.  
 For our Rule itself has made a plain Pro-  
 vision for this Manner of Celebration,  
 when both in the Title of the Book, and  
 in the Rubricks this Expression so often  
 occurs, *to be said or sung*. Now where  
 such an Alternative is proposed, he that  
 complies with either Branch of it, dis-  
 charges his Trust faithfully, and is guilty  
 of no Violation. The pretended Disso-  
 nancy therefore between Choral and Pa-  
 rochial Service can have no Weight with  
 any one, who considers that both the one  
 and the other are within the Limits of  
 that one regular Form and Method, by  
 which we are directed to guide ourselves  
 in the publick Worship of God. It hap-  
 pens pretty often in our Liturgy, that there  
 are

are two Hymns or two Collects to the SERM. same Effect, and it is left to the Discretion III. of the Minister, whether of the two he will read. But I never heard it urged as inconsistent with Uniformity, that one of these was read in one of our Churches, whilst the other was reading in another. And yet the same Reason by which that is justified, will justify the Practice I am asserting, which is, that the Matter is left indifferent, and in either Case, the disjunctive Particle *Or* in the Rubrick gives a discretionary Latitude. *You may say or sing, you may read this Prayer or that.*

IF there are any who object, that singing is too light and airy a Tone of Voice for humble Penitents confessing their Sins to God; what will they think of *David's* penitential Psalms? Do they imagine he was the less contrite, or that he felt the less Compunction of Soul for those Crimes which he bewailed, because his Confession was attended with another religious Act, the consecrating to God's Honour his musical Faculty, which others prostituted to more ungodly Purposes?

BUT

SERM. BUT there are some, and those well-meaning People, who complain that in a Choir, they find themselves at a Loss, their Attention is interrupted, they cannot join in, and go along with the Service, as they can in a Parish-Church. Perhaps a little Custom, and a constant Eye to their Common-Prayer-Book may in a great Measure remove this Inconvenience. But if there are any, who find their Devotion rather hindered than exalted by the Musick; there is an easy Remedy, since there is scarce any Choir, that has not a Parochial Church within a small Distance, where those, who are so disposed, may pay their Devotions in the Way they think most edifying and affecting.

BUT for the better preventing all just Exceptions to our Worship, it is highly incumbent on all who bear any part in the Performance of this Service, to behave themselves with the utmost Reverence and Decency, let them consider that it is their Business not to entertain the Ear but to raise the Devotion of the Congregation, and to employ those Talents they are possessed

essed of to the Honour of their great SERM.  
Creator. The Sense of this should have III.  
a constant Influence on their Conduct, not  
only in the Church, by a grave and seri-  
ous Deportment, by reverent and becom-  
ing Postures, but even on their whole Con-  
versation, as they are all in some Sense  
ecclesiastical Persons, whether in holy Or-  
ders, or not. Least of all should they suf-  
fer those Voices, with which they celebrate  
God's Praises, to be ever employed in  
Oaths and Curses, or in singing profane or  
filthy Songs.

I HAVE done with what can be said  
against the *Common Prayer*, and now it is  
high Time to say something for it, besides  
what I have offered in a defensive Way.

It is confessed, that the Compilers of it  
were Men of great Judgment and Piety,  
and who had Resolution enough to suffer  
Martyrdom for the Protestant Cause ;  
which is a farther Argument of the In-  
justice of those who charge their Compo-  
sure with Popery.

As to the Book itself, it is a sound  
Form of Worship, agreeable to the Form  
of sound Doctrine ; every Thing prescri-  
bed

SERM. bed in the Rubricks is lawful and allow-  
 III. able, fit and expedient, orderly and decent :

The Ceremonies are few, and those not burthensome nor improper, but chosen with great Deliberation, as may appear from the Preface or Declaration before the Book, relating to them.

THE Prayers are plain and unaffected, easy and perspicuous, expressed in grave and significant Language, in a clear and rational Method, extended to all our common Exigences, and fitted to all the Occasions that ought to be Matter of publick Prayer ; where there is Nothing omitted that we have any Encouragement to petition for, nor any Thing desired of God, but what we are warranted to ask, and have just Reason to expect, if he knows it to be proper and expedient for us, and conducive to our eternal Happiness. Where we urge no Merits but those alone of our crucified Redeemer, not our own, not those of departed Saints or Angels. Where we pray to God alone, and seek not to approach him by any other Mediator but his beloved Son. Where we address ourselves to him in the most suitable Terms of  
 Reverence



*Excellency of the English Liturgy.* III

Reverence and Respect, of Humility and SERM.  
Submission. Where we acknowledge all III.

his divine Attributes, confessing his un-  
bounded Power, when we call him the  
Almighty; his unerring Wisdom, when  
we invoke him as the Fountain of it; his  
Omniscience, when we tell him that no  
Secrets are hid from him, and that he  
knows our Necessities before we ask; his  
Mercy, when we own him for the God  
of it; and so for his other Properties.

AND as we invoke, adore and praise  
him in Terms that express the highest  
Awe and Reverence; so do we confess  
our Sins to him with the deepest Sorrow  
and Humiliation, we intercede, with an  
universal Charity, for all Mankind, we  
supplicate for future Mercies with a pious  
and humble Deference to his Will, and ac-  
knowledge past ones with a sensible and  
hearty Gratitude.

IT is indeed a System of Prayer so wise-  
ly calculated for all the Purposes of Devo-  
tion, that whatever Exceptions may have  
been made to it, it could never give just  
Cause for any; and in that Sense I call it  
inoffensive, not that none were ever of-  
fended


SERM. fended at it, but because none ought  
 III. to have been offended. And we may  
 reasonably challenge the Impugners of it,  
 to produce any Liturgy, either ancient or  
 modern, against which as great if not  
 greater Objections might not be brought,  
 if Men would make it their Business to  
 find Faults.

I AM sorry I must contract my self  
 where there is Room to be so copious,  
 but there is the less Need of enlarging,  
 since the Excellence of this Service has  
 been so fully displayed in a celebrated Ser-  
 mon that is in every body's Hands.

LEAVING therefore such intrinsick  
 Proofs as might be drawn from the Exa-  
 mination of the Liturgy itself in its several  
 Parts, I shall only urge the Testimony of  
 indifferent Persons in its Favour.

THE learned *Grotius* confessed long  
 since, that it came nearer the primitive  
 Pattern, than that of his own, or any  
 other of the Reformed Churches.

THOSE of the Reformation abroad at  
 this Day have it in great Admiration. It  
 has been translated into more than one  
 Language, is already used in one Prote-  
 stant

stant Country, with some Alterations, (as SERM. the different Nature of Governments makes III. it necessary) and more have shown a  Disposition to receive it.

AND there is great Reason to hope that on the next approaching *Advent Sunday*, being the beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year, it will be received in the Dominions of a great Prince, who himself is zealous in promoting the Design.

SURE I am it was not long since very fairly advanced. But if it should not immediately take Effect, the Disappointment will not be owing to their want of Esteem and Veneration for our *Common Prayer*, but to that Fear and Jealousy that most Men naturally have of the Effects of Innovations even for the better.

BUT if it should please God to prosper this Design, and that this little (nay more than a little) Leaven should in Proceſs of Time leaven the whole Lump of Protestants abroad; we may charitably hope, that our Brethren at home, who now dislike our Liturgy, when they find it so highly valued by the Foreign Churches,

SERM. will not stay to be the last Protestants in  
 III. *Europe* that embrace it.

I HAVE but a Word or two more to add by way of Exhortation.

LET us then who are Members of that Church, where God is served in so commendable a Manner, and where we have so convenient a Help for our Devotion provided; Let us I say learn to know and value our own Happiness, and make a right Use of the Opportunities we enjoy.

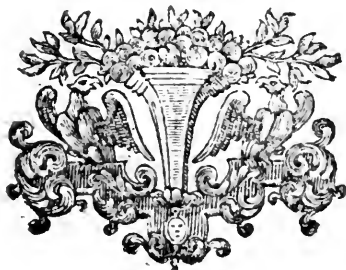
FOR in vain is this Provision made for us, in vain do we boast of the Excellence of our Form, if we our selves do not conform to it: If we carelessly absent ourselves, or come to the Celebration of it without due Reverence and Attention, with wandring Minds and roving Thoughts, with cold lifeless Hearts, and unmoved Affections: If we listen only to the Sound, and are regardless of the Sense.

MAY the good God grant that all of us, when we offer him this Service, may duly consider the Weight and Importance of those Petitions we are making: That we may lift up our Souls, as well as Voices: And that by the united Fervour  
 of

of our Devotion, and Flagrancy of our Zeal, we may effectually obtain, what we faithfully ask, and draw down the several Blessings we implore, on ourselves and all for whom we intercede. SERM.  
III.

AND this for the Sake and through the Merits of *Jesus* Christ our only Mediator.

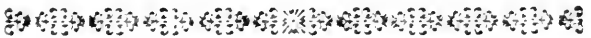
*TO whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, &c.*





# S E R M O N IV.

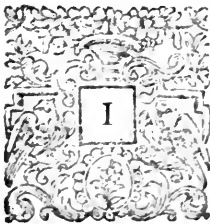
The Duty of Private Prayer.



Rom. xii. 12.

— *continuing instant in Prayer.*

SERM.  
IV.



HAVE already from these Words discoursed to you of *the Duty of Prayer in general, and of Publick Prayer in particular.* I have shown you the Lawfulness and Expedience of worshipping God in publick Assemblies by a Set Form of Prayer, and the peculiar Excellence of the Form prescribed to us in the Liturgy of

of our Church. I shall now consider this SERM.  
Precept of the Apostle, where he requires IV.  
us to continue instant in Prayer, as it re-  
lates to private Devotion, and that Wor-  
ship of God of which the Closet is the  
proper Scene. For there can be no Doubt  
but both of these are included in the Ex-  
hortation before us, our Obligation to ei-  
ther being equally strong and binding;  
nor can our most punctual Observance of  
one of them, atone for our Negligence,  
or Pretermission of the other, where fit  
Opportunities are not wanting for the Per-  
formance of it.

FOR as they who neglect the assembling  
themselves together, and repairing to the  
Places of publick Worship, under Pretence  
of serving God at Home, do not only vio-  
late an exprefs Command, but rob God of  
that Honour that is due to him, by refu-  
sing to acknowledge him in the great Con-  
gregation, themselves of many spiritual  
Advantages, and their fellow Christians of  
their Communion with them, and the En-  
couragement of their good Example: and  
by so doing, give great Cause of Suspicion,  
that they do not pray to God any where,

SERM. since they are so backward to offer their  
 IV. Prayers to him, where he has promised  
 to have a more immediate Regard to  
 them : and that the Light which they  
 hide under a Bushel, is totally extin-  
 guished ;

As these, I say, are the ill Consequen-  
 ces of declining the publick Service ; so  
 on the other Hand, they who only join  
 in the Prayers of the Church, and never  
 call upon God in Secret, 'tis greatly to be  
 feared come thither only to be seen of  
 Men ; and if so, they have their Reward  
 already.

'Tis plain such Men have but little Re-  
 gard to our Saviour's Injunction, when he  
 bids us enter into our Closets, and pray  
 there with the Doors shut, *i. e.* to be as  
 retired in our private Devotions as we can,  
 to pay our Adoration to Almighty God,  
 with a sincere Desire to please him, and  
 only him, without the least Mixture  
 of Ostentation, or Concern for human  
 Praise.

HE that can stoop to so poor an Aim,  
 when he is required to act from so much  
 nobler a Principle, must surely persuade  
 himself



himself, either that God cannot see in Secret, or that he wants the Power or the Will to reward openly ; or he must think the Applause of mistaken Men a more desirable Reward, than any God is able to bestow. SERM.  
IV.

We find by the History of our blessed Saviour, that he did not only worship in the Temple and the Synagogues, and with his Disciples alone, or a select Number of them ; (which was a Sort of Family-Prayer, and ought to be a powerful Motive to that Duty) but moreover that he withdrew himself from Company at certain Seasons in Order to a Solitary Devotion, free from any Interruption or Disturbance, and without any other Witness than his Heavenly Father, who in his Closet-Retirements was always present, and he himself declares, that he was never so far alone, *but that the Father was with him.* *John 16. 32.*

THUS has he thought fit to encourage our Obedience to his Precept, when he enjoyns us to enter into our Closets, by his own most glorious Example ; submitting in this, as in other Cases, to the Use of such Remedies as he himself did

SERM. not need, that we who do, might not  
 IV. scruple to have Recourse to the same Re-  
 remedies.

FOR this Reason he suffered himself to be baptized in *Jordan*, by which Baptism in others is signified the Mystical Washing away of Sin, though himself was entirely clean and pure from all Sin whatever, that no one ever after, who professed himself to be his Disciple, should decline that holy Institution which he had thus sanctified by his own Use: That they who were conceived and born in Sin, should joyfully receive this figurative Purgation, which their immaculate Lord himself did not disdain, that thus he might fulfill all Righteousness.

So far then as concerned himself, he might have dispensed with that Ceremony; nor did he come out of the River after his Baptismal Ablution a Whit cleaner than he went in.

AND as well might he have dispensed with those devotional Recesses and Retirements, as having none of those Occasions that make them necessary for us.

WE indeed have a strict Account to SERM. make of our Actions, a black Catalogue IV. of Sins to enumerate and bewail, a wicked and deceitful Heart to examine and explore through many intricate Windings and fallacious Doublings : not only an habitual Depravity and Proneness to Evil, but a numerous Train of actual Miscarriages, all which, as far as we are able to recollect them, we are obliged to make a particular Confession of; earnestly to implore the Pardon of our offended God, for every single Breach of his Commands, which after the most careful and severe Disquisition, we are conscious to ourselves that we have been guilty of, besides that general Petition of the holy Psalmist, that *he would cleanse us from our secret Faults.*

BUT how can all this be duly performed in the midst of Noise and Hurry, of Tumult and Distraction, where the wanton Levities, or busy Cares of the World will be ever and anon breaking in upon us, and interrupting the Chain of our Meditations?

THE Service of the Church itself is not sufficient to answer all the devout Purposes

SERM. poses before-mentioned, which they who  
 IV. frequent with the greatest Reverence and  
 Attention, may still be ignorant of their  
 spiritual State, if they do not examine  
 themselves with a greater Nicety and Ex-  
 actness than is possible to be done in the  
 publick Assembly. And it is but a small  
 Proportion of a Man's Sins, that will oc-  
 cur to his Mind, while the general Con-  
 fession is reading.

THE Knowledge of ourselves is not so  
 light and easy a Thing, as to be suddenly  
 and hastily acquired. There is a Spring  
 and Fountain of latent Malignity that lies  
 deep buried within us, which is not to be  
 discovered without great heed and confi-  
 derate Reflection.

The Prophet tells us, *that the Heart is  
 deceitful above all Things, and desperately  
 wicked*, and then subjoins a Question, that  
 well nigh imports an absolute Negation,  
*who can know it?*

No one indeed can know it thoroughly,  
 who contents himself with a cursory and  
 superficial Review of his past Actions and  
 present Purposes, and does not sift himself  
 to the Bottom.

A MAN has need of great Diligence and a close Application, that would find out all his past Errors, and trace them back through the several Degrees and Stages by which they have insensibly gained upon him, to their first Original: When the first Breach was made in his Innocence, and what was the ensnaring Bait that drew him in: Seriously to weigh and ponder the Guilt and Heinousness of them, and the several Aggravations by which they have been heightened.

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IV.

AND when after the most strict and impartial Scrutiny, he has discovered the Naughtiness of his own Heart, and is sensibly convinced both how bad he is, and how he came to be so; yet will this Knowledge or Discovery be of no Avail to him, unless he proceeds to form a steady and settled Resolution of abstaining from those Actions for the Time to come, of avoiding the Snares, and keeping out of the Way of such Temptations and Allurements, by which he was before inveigled.

Now this is not to be done with Rashness and Precipitancy, in a sudden Heat,  
and

SERM. and transient Gust of Passion : But a Man  
 IV. must think considerately, and resolve soberly, he must arm himself with prudent Caution as well as with a firm and well-grounded Courage, and prepare for the Opposition he must expect to meet with in the violent Struggle between Duty and Inclination.

AND to this End Retirement and Privacy must greatly contribute ; nay, without it it is scarce possible to know any thing certain as to the State of our Souls, or to take up any wise and holding Resolution for the Recovery of them from the Dominion of Sin and *Satan*.

LET a Man's Mind be never so religiously employ'd, yet so long as he lies open to all the Avocations that may offer themselves, and will suffer himself to be called off in the midst of his Devotions, he will find Cause to regret not only the Loss of so much Time as was spent in that Interval, but that after he is returned to his Prayers or Meditations, something he saw or heard during the Interruption will stick upon his Mind, and take up room in his Thoughts, so that he cannot  
 without

without some Pains and Difficulty recover SERM.  
the same Frame and Disposition of Soul, IV.  
to which he had wrought himself up be-  
fore he was disturbed.

NOR indeed can any Thing be more grievous and unwelcome to a devout and truly pious Soul, than, when it is most agreeably occupied, and entertaining itself with the noblest Objects, to be drawn off from the Contemplation of God and his Attributes of Heaven and Heavenly Things, on some mean and frivolous Occasion, and such every Occasion may be accounted, that relates only to worldly Affairs, in Comparison of those sublime and lofty Subjects in which it was wrapt up before.

BUT when a Man is wholly secluded from all Company, and perfectly at Leisure for such devotional Exercises, what Pleasure can be equal to that of so conversing with his Almighty Creator, disburthening his Soul before him, and casting all his Care upon him that careth for him? What Words can sufficiently express the ravishing Transports of Joy, which that Soul must experience, that in its Flights of De-  
votion

SERM. votion can, as it were, put off the Flesh,  
 IV. divest itself of all Care or Concern for  
 wordly and terrestrial Objects, and have  
 its Conversation in Heaven?

WHAT a true spiritual Comfort and Consolation does it feel in every Part of that Holy Exercise? With what a pleasing Ecstasy of Love and Gratitude does it praise God for his Mercies? With what a full Assurance of Hope does it implore his farther Benefits and deprecate his Judgments? Nay, even from the deepest Sorrow and Contrition for those Sins by which it has provoked him; what a Redundancy of Joy arises? For, as widely opposite as they seem, Joy itself, the most solid and sprightly Joy, is the Result of that Godly Sorrow that worketh Repentance not to be repented of. There is no Heart so enlarged with Delight and Satisfaction, as that which has been straitned and distressed with the Sense of its own Guilt; the broken and contrite Spirit is afterwards the most raised and exalted, and a Man is never so truly glad, as when he is glad that he has been made sorry after a godly Sort.

WHILST



WHILST the holy Recluse is thus, at SERM. proper and convenient Seasons, withdrawn IV. from the World, and at Leisure to pursue his heavenly Meditations, to perform the several Acts of secret Piety, and enjoy an undisturbed Communication with God; he opens all his Wants, discovers all his hidden Frailties, and pours out his Soul to him with a hearty and sincere Confidence, and without Extenuation or Reserve: He knows 'tis in vain to cover or conceal any Crime from him, to whom it is already known, before it is confessed, nay even before it was committed.

IF he uses any Help to his Devotion (as there are very good and useful ones provided) he does not think it enough to rest in a bare Repetition of the Words, but endeavours heartily to affect himself with the Sense and Meaning of them.

AND when he finds the Prayers too general, and not sufficiently adapted to his particular Case, but that he is directed therein to make a special Mention of the Sins he has committed, the Duties he has neglected, the Mercies he has received, his own temporal or spiritual Wants, or the  
Persons

SERM. Persons he is more immediately bound to  
 IV. pray for ; his own affectionate Sense  
 and godly Discretion is ready to supply  
 what could not be provided for in any  
 written Form, inasmuch as the Case of  
 each individual Christian is, in these Re-  
 spects, different from that of all others.

BUT then he has this Advantage, that  
 if proper and suitable Expressions do not  
 readily occur to him, whereby he may sup-  
 ply what remains to be accommodated to  
 his particular Occasions, he has Leisure to  
 study for them, and need not, through a  
 causeless and inconsiderate Haste, utter his  
 Mind in indecent or improper Terms. God  
 judgeth not as Man judgeth, nor does he  
 at all regard how fast or fluently we pray,  
 but how fervently and cordially : Inasmuch  
 that if no Words at all should follow our  
 Conceptions ; yet our Devotion will not be  
 the less accepted, provided our Heart be  
 touched with an inward Sense and Feel-  
 ing.

WE must not expect to be the better  
 heard for our much, or our fine speaking,  
 nor can we imagine that God will be taken  
 with Rhetorical Tropes and Figures. He

is a Spirit, and 'tis with our Spirit he has SERM.  
Communion; while that is pure and un- IV.  
polluted, he beholds some Rays of his own  
Perfection there, and is drawn to it by a kind  
of mystical Attraction. But empty Words  
and Sound can make no more Impres-  
sion on his spiritual Nature, than Stripes or  
Blows.

So long then as the internal Meaning  
of those Prayers, which only concern God  
and ourselves, is found and uncorrupt, we  
may be assured that he little regards the  
Elegancy of Stile or Politeness of Expres-  
sion, provided we say nothing irreverent  
or unmannerly.

AND the like may be said as to our  
Gesture of Body. For though we cannot  
fall too low, nor humble ourselves too much  
before him; yet in vain are all Prostrations  
of Body, if our Heart is not humbled as  
well as that. But when all Pride and  
Haughtiness are once effectually quelled,  
the devout Suppliant may make his private  
Address to God in such bodily Postures as  
the Sense of his own Vileness and God's  
infinite Greatness will naturally extort from  
him, which sometimes perhaps will be

SERM. the several Books of private Devotion,

IV. with which (blessed be God) this Nation  
 is plentifully stored, do at once both exemplify and explain the Apostle's Rule, where he exhorts that Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men.

The two first of which Particulars, *viz.* Supplications and Prayers, though they seem to be of the same Import, are thus distinguished from each other, that the former of them is a Petition for Pardon, the latter for Help : the one being grounded on our previous Confession of Guilt, the other on our Acknowledgment of Want and Poverty.

According therefore to this Exhortation, we first must make our humble Confession to Almighty God, bewailing our manifold Impurities and Corruptions, our original Stain and natural Propensity to Evil, with the daily and hourly Accession of actual Enormities : beseeching him for his own infinite Mercy, and thro' the Merits of his beloved Son, to blot out the Remembrance of them, to restore us to his Grace and Favour, and set

set us free both from the Guilt and Domi-  
nion of them.

SERM.  
IV.  
~

IN Confidence of his Pardon thus obtained, we next proceed to call for Help. We lay before him our Wants and Necessities, our naked and destitute Condition, how unable we are to subsist of ourselves, if not daily relieved by his bountiful Providence: we beseech him to continue his Fatherly Indulgence to us, and still to afford us such Things as are necessary both for our Souls and Bodies: to avert from us whatever would be hurtful to, or destructive of either; to endue us with all Grace and Virtue, and guide us with his holy Spirit, and to bring us at last to his Heavenly Kingdom, and crown us with everlasting Glory.

And to manifest as well the just Sense we have of his Sufficiency, and that we do not think his granting the Requests of one, will so impoverish him as not to leave him wherewith to relieve another, as it often happens to us mortals, and particularly in the Case of *Isaac*, who when one Blessing was gone out from him, had not a second to bestow, at least not equal to the

SERM. first: That, I say, we may show as well

IV. the Opinion we have of his All-sufficiency, as also our Christian Love and Charity ; we pray not only for ourselves, but others.

WE intercede in a more especial Manner for those to whom we are any way related or allied by Birth or Affinity, by Service or Dependance, by Subjection or Subordination ; and more largely for all who belong to the same civil Community with ourselves, for all that profess our common Christianity, nay for all that partake of the same common Nature with us.

BUT are we not expressly told in Scripture, that *Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and Man* ? With what Confidence then can one Man presume to become a Mediator for another ?

To which I answer : That our Prayers to God for one another are so far from interfering with Christ's Mediation, that they acknowledge and recognize it. We offer up those very Intercessions in his Name, and confess him to be our only Mediator and Advocate. We presume not

not to mediate by Virtue of our own Merits, but for the Sake of our blessed Redeemer, and in Subordination to him. We modestly Petition for that which he can with Authority require, since he has paid the Price of their Redemption. We can only beg of our heavenly Lord, that he would frankly forgive the Debt which neither they nor we have wherewithal to satisfy, and that in Supply of our Disability, he would accept the Satisfaction made by his beloved Son.

SERM.  
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HOWEVER, that the fervent Prayer of a righteous Man is oftentimes effectual for others as well as for himself, and that, not for single Persons only, but also for whole Kingdoms, we have both the Testimony of St. *James*, and divers Instances likewise in Holy Scripture. We read that God would have condescended so far at the earnest Request of *Abraham*, as to have spared *Sodom*, and forbore the Execution of his intended Judgment, if he could have found in that large and populous City but ten righteous Persons to expiate for the Guilt of such a Multitude of bad ones. Thus when he was ready to have destroyed the disobedient *Israelites*, his Servant

SERM. *Moses* stood before him in the Gap, and  
 IV. stayed his Fury. And at another Time  
 when he had sent a Pestilence among  
 them; then stood up *Phineas*, and prayed  
 [or executed Judgment] and so the Plague  
 ceased. Thus when *Job* interceded for his  
 Friends, God was contented to hear him  
 speak for them, tho' he would not permit  
 them to plead for themselves.

BUT in these and all other Cases, where  
 the Prayers of a good Man are prevalent  
 enough to obtain a Pardon for a bad one,  
 we never find that he pretends to any  
 Right, or insists on his own Worthiness,  
 but leaves it entirely to the free Bounty  
 and Beneficence of God.

You see with what Modesty and Sub-  
 mission *Abraham* makes his Address; how  
 many Excuses he makes for presuming to  
 speak to God, when he was but Dust and  
 Ashes.

BUT that wherein the Difference be-  
 tween our Saviour's Intercession and that  
 of all others does chiefly consist, is this,  
 that the most powerful of human Medi-  
 ators, though they may possibly contribute  
 in some Measure to the averting the Pu-  
 nishment,



nishment, yet can never take away the SERM.  
Guilt; they may prevail with God to have IV.  
some Patience with his Debtor, for whom  
they sue, but can never cancel the Obligation.

So that although, when we make our Petitions for one another with pious Minds and cordial Dispositions, we may all in some Sort be said to be Mediators; yet in the highest and most excellent Sense of the Word, as it imports one who has some Right and Authority so to interpose, it is a most undoubted Truth which is affirmed by *St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 5. That there is but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.*

IN the mean Time sure it is, we are in more than one Place of Scripture required to interpose our charitable Requests in behalf of our Christian Brethren: We are told they shall be of some Significancy if they are fervent; and we read of Cases where they have been so, and consequently we both may and ought, as we are directed, to let one Part of our Prayers consist of Intercession for others.

SERM. THE last Branch of Prayer mentioned

IV. by the Apostle in the Text above-named, is giving of Thanks. This we cannot but own to be a very just and reasonable Debt, where we have received so much, even all that we have, and where we owe our Dependance for all that is yet to come. What less Return can we make, than the thanking our Benefactor, owning him as such? We stand indebted to the divine Bounty for the Nourishment that sustains us, the Rayment that clothes us, and the very Air we breath. Whatever spiritual or temporal Blessings we enjoy, he is the sole Giver and Disposer of them. And these he is at all Times ready to shower down upon us in great Abundance; nor can any Thing but our Ingratitude for past Mercies, defeat us of a new Succession of them, and make him divert the Stream of his Blessings into some other Channel.

WHATEVER Good befalls us, we must ever be careful to ascribe it to the supreme Fountain of all Good. We must be thankful both for general and particular Mercies: not only for those vouchsafed immediately to ourselves, but for those we enjoy in Com-

mon

mon with the rest of Mankind. We must SERM.  
bless and praise him for his Creation of the IV.  
World, his gracious and wise Administration of the Course of it, and for the great Variety of Comforts it abounds with: but especially for the greatest of them all, the raising us above it, and giving us a Prospect of a more glorious and happy State to come, which is purchased for us by the Death of his ever-blessed Son, and revealed to us in his Holy Word.

THE Blessing of our Redemption is of so inestimable a Price, that if we have any Gratitude, our Hearts will be always full and overflowing with the Sense of it, and we shall never cease devoutly to commemorate it.

AND here I cannot but observe to you, that the original Word for giving of Thanks in that Passage of *St. Paul*, where the several Parts of Prayer are enumerated, is *εὐχαριστία*, from whence is derived our *English* Word *Eucharist*, by which we understand that grateful Sacrifice of Praise and Thanks which we offer to Almighty God, in Remembrance of the Death and Passion of his Son, when we duly partake  
of

SERM. of the Holy Communion of his Body and

IV. Blood. Though every thing we receive at  
 his Hands ought to be Matter of Thank-  
 fulness, and deserves our most sincere and  
 hearty Acknowledgments, yet his so loving  
 the World as to give his only begotten Son  
 to suffer Death upon the Cross for our Re-  
 demption, is a Blessing so transcendently  
 great, as should enflame us with the high-  
 est Degree of Love, and which requires  
 the most exalted Strains of Gratitude.

Now the properest Way of expressing  
 our most grateful Resentment of the Be-  
 nefits of that his precious Blood-shedding,  
 is in that Method which he himself has  
 commanded and prescribed us ; Symboli-  
 cally to represent that Oblation of him,  
 which he himself made really and truly, to  
 do that mystically in Remembrance of  
 him, which he has strictly done, and in  
 a literal Sense in Remembrance of us. When  
 we perform this Holy Mystery with a due  
 Preparation of Heart, and truly religious  
 Frame of Spirit ; when we are sensibly af-  
 fected with the exceeding Greatness of his  
 Love, and solemnly resolve to make him  
 the utmost Returns of Duty and Obedi-  
 ence

ence which our finite and imperfect Nature can possibly attain to ; this is in the truest Sense *εὐχαριστεῖν*, to give Thanks, which is the best and most acceptable Part of Prayer.

SERM.  
IV.  
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NAY, the very Institution and Command of our blessed Saviour, and his requiring us thus to shew forth his Death, is a Matter of fresh Obligation to us. For whilst we are thus offering our Tribute of Praise to him, we find all the real advantage returns upon ourselves.

AND as it is the usual Consequence of a just and unfeigned Gratitude, that it draws down on the grateful Person some new additional Mercies ; so fares it with the devout and worthy Communicant : He feels such an Improvement in all his Graces, his Faith so enlivened, his Hope so confirmed, his Charity so enflamed, and, in a Word, his whole inward Man so much bettered and amended, that after he has been paying his Thanks to God, in and by the Holy Sacrament, he perceives he has fresh Occasion to thank him for it.

SERM. AND thus have I represented to you the

IV. several Parts of which our Prayers must
 ordinarily consist; I mean those set and
 stated Devotions which we have Leisure
 and Opportunity to perform at large, either
 in the Church or Closet, not excluding
 such short and concise Ejaculations in any
 one of those Kinds, as sudden and emer-
 gent Occasions may require of us, when
 we have not Room or Convenience to go
 through them all.

UPON the whole Matter, if we expect
 any Blessing upon our Endeavours, or
 that our Undertakings should thrive and
 prosper, we first must dedicate both our-
 selves and them to God, earnestly im-
 ploring his divine Patronage and Direc-
 tion, without which, all our own Care,
 and Industry, and Watchfulness, is in
 vain.

WE may think highly of our own
 Power and Ability, and be big with ima-
 ginary Aims and Projects; but if God
 does not approve and second them, we
 may be assured that they will either not
 succeed, or that our very Success will
 ruin us.

AND

AND it is no less sure, that he will never be induced to favour our Designs, if we do not think his Assistance worth the asking. SERM.
IV.

BUT here it may be, and has been by some objected : Are we not taught that the Divine Providence is continually watching for our Good ? Does not the Almighty know all our Necessities before we ask, nay, before we know them ourselves, and more than we know or think we need ? And is not his fatherly Indulgence always ready to relieve those Necessities under which he sees us labour ? And if so, what Need is there of Praying ? Why should we trouble God with importunate Sollicitations, for that which he is of his own Accord inclined to give us ?

BUT in Answer to such profane and ungodly Reasoners, we have God's own positive Command to alledge ; that very God who is so able and willing to assist us, who knows our Wants better than we do ourselves, has himself required us to ask, that we may receive. He is always extending his Mercies toward us, and has an infinite Store of them ready provided for

SERM. for us, but he has appointed Prayer as the
 IV. instrumental Cause of drawing them down
 upon us.

IT is true, he might, if he had thought fit, have granted us what we stand in Need of, without our suing or petitioning for it: And so he might, if he had pleased, have resolved to save us absolutely and unconditionally, without any Regard either to the Soundness of our Faith, or Sincerity of our Obedience: He might have made a Heaven of this Earth, and Angels of us Men: But this is arguing for God's Power, in Opposition to his Will, and contradicting the settled Course of his Providence, which has appointed such Conditions as the Means of obtaining such Advantages. And what Condition can be more practicable and easy, than only to ask and have our Wish effected?

OUR Prayers therefore do not become superfluous from God's Willingness to grant, forasmuch as he is only willing to grant to them who are as willing to pray.

To act otherwise, would be to cross the great End for which he made us, *viz.* The Advancement of his own Glory,
 For

For what Glory do they ascribe to him, SERM.
who never adore him as their Creator, nor IV.
invoke him as their Benefactor, nor intreat
him as their Judge?

BESIDES, there is a great Mistake in the Objection, when it supposes that God would be troubled or teased with the Importunity of our Solicitations. This is a poor *Epicurean* Notion, which highly derogates from his infinite Perfection, and represents him as capable of intending but a few Objects at a Time : Whereas he surveys the whole Universe at one single View, and all the minutest Parts of which it is composed, with as much Ease as if it were one uniform Object.

WE may pray then without incommoding God, we must pray if we would please him, or if we expect any Benefit and Assistance from him. And there are none who stand more in Need of our Prayers, than they who persuade themselves they need neither their own, nor ours.

OTHERS there are, who are better convinced of the Usefulness of Prayer, and will own it to be sometimes necessary, but not always, though the Exhortation in

SERM. my Text requires us to *continue instant in*
 IV. *Prayer*, and other Places there are to the
 same Purpose.

BUT they cry, they have not always the same Occasion for Succour, and why should they call for it, when they do not want it? 'Tis true, when they are in a helpless and dejected Estate, oppressed with Misery, and laden with Misfortunes, they know whither to betake themselves: That it is proper at such a Juncture to fly to Heaven for Relief, when they despair of any human Remedy. But while Matters go smoothly and easily with them, and they have all that their Heart can wish, what can they desire more, or to what Purpose should they pray? And they think St. *James* himself gives some Countenance to this Distinction, when he prescribes, *that if any one is afflicted he should pray; but if any one is merry, he should sing.*

BUT is there then no Part of Prayer that is fit for a prosperous and flourishing Condition? Do we forget to whose Bounty and Indulgence we owe our Happiness and Ease? And is there no Return of Thanks due to him? Are we sure we are so far
 Masters

Masters of what we enjoy, that nothing can dispossess us of it? And have we no Reason to pray for the Continuance of our Prosperity? Have we no spiritual Wants to be supplied, or do we look upon our Souls, as not worth our Care? If our Health and Plenty makes us unmindful of God, and regardless of his Providence; may not such Ingratitude very justly provoke him to visit us with the contrary Afflictions, and starve us into a better Mind?

SERM.

IV.

As to St. *James's* Advice, 'tis true he directs those that are merry, *i. e.* who have no Calamity either spiritual or temporal to disquiet them, who are at Ease in their Bodies, their Estates and their Consciences, to sing. But what would he have them sing? Why, Psalms and Spiritual Songs.

ALL then that can be inferred from this Passage is, that the afflicted and the happy Person, as they are not upon the same Terms, are not to pray exactly to the same Effect. The one must be larger in his Supplications and Petitions, the other

SERM. in his Praises and Thanksgivings : But still
 IV. they must both pray.

I SHALL now conclude all with a brief Exhortation, *viz.* that we would not only let our Prayers be hearty and sincere, ardent and affectionate, and such as proceed from a pure Heart ; but that whatever we ask, we would do it with Faith, nothing doubting but that in due Time we shall be answered, and obtain our Requests in Value at least, if not in Kind.

LET us not be discouraged, nor grow impatient, or think ourselves neglected, or our Prayers insignificant, if all we crave is not immediately granted. Let us have but a little longer Patience, and that that shall come, will come. Whatever we ask must still be with an humble Deference and Submission to his Divine Will, who best can judge what is proper and convenient for us, and who when we beg of him such Things as would be hurtful and pernicious, does most indulgently deny them to us, and it is our Privilege to be without them.

Let any one but reflect on his past Life, and consider how many Things in the
 Course

Course of it, which he passionately longed for, would have proved his Ruin if he had obtained them, and how many others which he was most averse to, have turned to his greatest Advantage, and he will be convinced of the Shortness of his own Sight, and the Reasonableness of trusting all to God.

HOWEVER let us not cease continually to importune him, let us not be weary, or faint in our Supplications, but constantly urge both his own gracious Promises, and the Merits of his beloved Son; and we may rest firmly assured, that our Prayers will ascend for a Memorial unto him, that he will faithfully perform those Promises, and in his own due Time and Manner effectually answer whatever Requests we offer in the Name, and for the Sake of our crucified Redeemer.

TO whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, &c.



S E R M O N V.

The Safety and Stability of Christian Principles.



COL. ii. 6, 7.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him : Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving.

SERM.
V.



WHEN St. Paul perceived the Colossians, whom he had lately converted to the Christian Faith by the faithful Ministry of Epaphras, to be in Danger of relapsing from

from that Faith again, through the Infi-
nuations of some crafty and ill-defigning
Men, who made it their Business to un-
settle them in their Principles, and to pull
down again what the Apostle had built
up; he sets himself in this Epistle, and
particularly in this Part of it, to warn
them of the Snares that were laid for
them, and the dangerous Consequence of
deserting that JESUS, to whom they had
devoted themselves, or suffering themselves
to be drawn off from their Allegiance, by
worldly Philosophy, or forged Traditions,
or any other Artifice whereby those cun-
ning Seducers lay in wait to deceive them.
That him whom they had solemnly ac-
knowledged for their Lord, they should
constantly adhere to, and be obedient to
his Law in all Things. That it was by
no Means for their Safety or Interest, to
let their Faith be light and fluctuating,
and swimming on the Surface, but that it
ought to sink down into their Hearts,
and there take a deep and lasting Root.

That they should never warp from the
Foundation they were built upon, but
stand firm on their Basis, encreasing daily

SERM. in Heighth, without expatiating wider, or
 V. growing more narrow and contracted, so
 as not to be shaken or drove from it by
 the Violence of any Storms.

THAT they should not content themselves with slightly tasting that salutary Doctrine, and so stop short where they were first entered, but make a constant Progress therein, and pursue it with all their Vigour, till they largely abounded with spiritual Knowledge, returning all due Thanks to that God who had called them from that State of Perdition in which they before lay, to be the Children of Grace and Heirs of Glory.

THIS, or to this Purpose, the Apostle seems to drive at, by his Allusions to a Root and a Building, and other Expressions as well proper as metaphorical.

A NOBLE and highly necessary Exhortation, and very fit to be applied to the Men of the Age we now live in, since even at this Day there are not wanting too many, who though they have received Christ Jesus for their Lord, and have been solemnly initiated in his Mysteries, yet are very far from walking in him: So far
 from


from being rooted and built up in him, SERM.
that they are ready to be carried away V.
by every the lightest Breath of Philosophy
and vain Doctrine, and not only turn De-
ferters themselves, but make it their Busi-
ness to pervert others.

AGAINST which foul and dangerous
Apostasie, I shall now, by God's Assist-
ance, offer a Preservative; and though I
am persuaded I am not now speaking to
any of that unhappy Number, who reject
the first Principles of Religion, but on the
contrary, to a great many, who are not
only thoroughly grounded, but have made
large Improvements, and are far advanced
both in Belief and Practice; yet since no
one can be too well and securely fortified
against the deceitful Arguments he may
meet with in the Course of his Conversa-
tion, and since it is an Injunction laid on
every Christian, that he be ready to give
an Answer to every Man, that asketh him
a Reason of the Hope that is in him; I
shall not think my Time misemployed, if
I endeavour to strengthen and confirm you
in the first Articles of your Faith, on
which all the others depend.

SERM. IT is no Disparagement to a high and
 V. well-built Structure, (to keep to our Apo-
 w well-built Structure, (to keep to our Apo-
 stle's Metaphor) if the Foundations of it
 be sometimes searched, to see if Nothing
 there be at a Fault, but that all stands fast
 and sure ; for if that be unsound or weak,
 whatever is built upon it must stand very
 loose and tottering.

AND I think there can be no better Ex-
 pedient for strengthening the Foundation
 of our Belief (and Nothing sure can be
 more just and reasonable) than that every
 Man should firmly resolve never to heark-
 en to any one that goes about to persuade
 him out of his Christianity, who does not
 offer to put him in a better Way, and show
 him some other System that either makes
 fairer Promises, or of the Performance of
 whose Promises there is better Security, or
 that rests on a surer Bottom : When such
 a System indeed is proposed, (as I am sure
 it never yet has been) I will be far from
 hindering or opposing his Conversion to it.

THAT he would consider with himself,
 as every prudent Man does, in all the
 Transactions of Life, especially in those of
 the highest Concernment, whether his
 Gain

Gain or Loss is like to be the greater ; SERM.
left while he starts at some petty Difficul- V.
ties, and is angry that all the Mysteries of 
Faith are not just suited to the Standard of
his Reason, he should fly for Refuge to
such Principles as are neither consistent
with Reason, nor with one another, which
pretend to settle Nothing, and yet unsettle
every thing, which leave a Man in the
greatest Perplexity and Anguish, with No-
thing to believe, Nothing to hope, No-
body to trust, and no whither to turn
himself.

THAT I may not affirm this without
Proof, and that it may the more evident-
ly appear how far those Men are from ha-
ving bettered their Condition, who have
bid *Adieu* to the Gospel, and taken up the
Liberty of Free-thinking, as they call it,
I shall endeavour to evince these three
Propositions.

First, THAT no Man can be easy or
happy, till he has, once for all, pitch-
ed on some Set of Principles, from
which he is resolved never to depart.

Secondly,



Secondly, THAT neither Atheism nor Deism has any fixed or certain Principles, nor is it possible for any Man to cleave to either of them with a constant uninterrupted Tenor. And,

Thirdly, THAT the Christian Religion, and only that, is founded on such Principles, to which it is both safe for a Man to assent, and possible for him to adhere.

First, THAT no Man can be easy, &c.

So long as a Man is at a Loss with himself, and in Doubt as to these great necessary Points ; Who gave him Life ; What is his End of Living ; To what Purpose he acts ; or, What he drives at, there is Nothing in the Creation so contemptible or so miserable as he. It is indeed a Piece of Wisdom to consider well, to examine and try every Thing before we give a rash Assent, and take up our holding Resolution : But to be always doubting and uncertain, and never to acquiesce in the very first Principles, is not only Impiety, but Madness. A Mind thus vari-

ous and perplexed about the Objects of SERM.
Faith, is certainly the most racking and V.
severe Tormentor in the World; when it
believes Nothing so surely, but that the
least Shadow of an Argument on the other
Side shall undo all again, and unravel all
its Purposes.

HAVING once swerved from the strait
Path of Truth, it bewilders itself in
the perplexed Labyrinths of Doubt and
Scepticism, runs on in a perpetual Round
of Errors, and is vainly disquieted in the
Search of that which it can never find.

IF a Man therefore will make a right
Use of his Reason, he must not only con-
sider what is just before him, but provide
for Futurity, and guard against the Evils
that may happen hereafter. He must learn
to separate Truth from Falshood, Honesty
from Baseness, and to judge not only whe-
ther a Thing be simply good, but between
the Degrees of Goodness: Of profitable
Things, which will be most gainful: Of
hurtful Things, which will be least preju-
dicial: And from all these duly weighed,
he must lay down and form to himself a
certain Rule of acting and believing, which
he

SERM. he must inviolably pursue and walk by,
 V. and suffer no Temptation to divert him
 from it.

WHEN he is once settled in such an even and undistracted Course, it is then he begins to live, all that he had done before being lost Labour, and no Way conducive to the main Purpose of his Life. Then does he enjoy a true Peace and Serenity of Mind, when without any farther Scruple or Hesitation, without Loss of Time in going out of his Way, to seek for a better or a nearer; he goes on directly to the Mark. He has something now in View, on which he can with Security depend: He knows what he aims at, he knows it to be worthy his Aim, he sees by what Means it must be compassed: And 'tis in vain after that for any one to pretend to draw him aside from such a rooted Persuasion.

How much happier is such a State, than to be perpetually wavering, to stand as it were on one Foot, and not know where to set the other: not only to be ignorant of the Way that should lead one Home, but to have no Home at all to be led to: To be
 governed

governed by blind Chance, and carried SERM. backward and forward with every Tide: V. to be always doing and undoing: To act at Random we know not what, nor why, without ever casting up the Account of Life, or levelling our Designs at any certain Scope.

IN short, unless you are willing to waste your whole Life before you have resolved what Method of Life you will fix to, once for all, take Reason and Experience for your Guides, examine, deliberate, ponder every Thing, Causes and Effects, Means and Ends, what has been said or done, the Nature and Operations both of the Soul and Body, lay all these together, and compare them with one another, and when you have so done, chuse out the Way that you will walk in; I do not say, such a one as is clogged with no Difficulties, which 'tis in vain for you to expect, but that which has the fewest, and those the most easy to be surmounted. And, to finish this Head in one Word, either give yourself wholly up to some Religion, or declare yourself of none, and keep to it.

SERM. BUT that the latter of these cannot be,
 V. I am now going to show in my


Second Head, which is this, That neither Atheism nor Deism has any fixed or certain Principles; nor is it possible for any Man to adhere with Constancy to the same irreligious Notions.

IT must be confessed indeed that the Abettors of those Notions, so far as they are employed in opposing the Tenets of others, and invalidating their Belief, may for a while please and hug themselves, and fancy they are the only Persons of Sense and Discernment, while the rest of the World is blind and cannot see the Cheat.

THEY know very well that it is a much easier Thing to ask a Question, than to answer it, to tye a Knot than to unty it; that a Sword to give a Wound with, is much more portable and light of Carriage, than Armour to keep it off.

This encourages them to set up for Champions, where they think they can look big, and make a Figure upon the cheapest Terms, Objections being easy and obvious, such as every Fool can hit on,

as

as our Proverb says, whilst the Solutions, SERM.
though very strong and solid, have often- V.
times the Disadvantage of lying deep, and 
requiring a greater Application of Thought
to comprehend them, than such loose
and fluttering Reasoners are willing to
bestow.

BUT the Weakness and Folly of that
Cause will more fully appear, when we
consider, that such Infidels as either disown
Religion in general, or all revealed Reli-
gion, have no other Aim, but to demolish
whatever has been built by others, to root
out the most certain and acknowledged
Truths, to dispossess Men of all Awe or
Reverence for any Thing that is sacred, all
Inclination to Good or Abhorrence of Evil,
all the Knowledge of God and invisible
Things, which either has been revealed to
us by himself, or demonstrated by the
Light of Nature, and confirmed by the
unanimous Consent of Mankind; the Ori-
ginal of all which Notions they ascribe to
Fear, and the Continuance of them to the
Prejudice of Education.

BUT they themselves, in the mean
Time, have nothing to offer in the Room

SERM. of them. They can show you no Support
 V. for the Mind, after they have dug away
 the old Foundation that sustained it; and
 when they have stripped you naked, and
 divested you of all Principles, they can di-
 rect you to no other Shelter.

THEY have indeed sufficiently explained themselves, and told us what they would not have; but what it is they would have, 'tis very hard for others to guess, and more than they themselves can tell. For 'tis their constant Practice to lurk as long as they are able, among Negatives, from which Hiding-places, they care not to be dragged out into the Light, so as to be obliged to give an Account of their own Faith, if we may call it Faith; they care not to answer, in their Turn, to those weighty Objections with which their own Cause is pressed.

As for Example, if you ask them, whence came this beautiful Structure of the Universe, if no Body built it? What is it, even at this Day, that sustains and connects this pendulous Globe, and keeps it from bursting asunder with its Fulness, or sinking with its Weight? Whether the
 numberless

numberless Instances of Wisdom and Power, and Order and Regularity, which No-body can help observing in the Course of Things, are not a much fairer Proof of a divine Providence, than those few Irregularities which they think they can point to, in the Administration of it, can furnish them with against it ?

SERM.
V.


IF, as they pretend, there is nothing else but Matter and Motion in the World, yet who was it that gave the first Motion to Matter, which of itself is heavy and sluggish, and like to have remained in one eternal Rest ? Or who is it now, that gives such Variety of Determinations to that Motion ?

BY whose Impulse or Direction do those Creatures that are utterly destitute of all Sense or Reason of their own, so admirably conspire to bring about the wisest and noblest Ends ? Besides, since there are evidently different Degrees of Perfection in the Beings that compose the Universe, some of which are more excellent than others, and others again than they ; I would only ask how high this Gradation is to be carried, where will they stop at last, and what

SERM. will they allow to be the most absolute
 V. and perfect Species of all?

WE can see nothing in this visible World more perfect than ourselves; for we see no other Being endued with Thought and Understanding, which is the noblest Accomplishment we are yet acquainted with. And yet with all this comparative Excellency, how vastly short is Man of absolute Perfection? What various Infirmities and Defects is he subject to, and how plainly does he feel, though he cannot see, another Power far more superior to him, than he himself is to the Beasts of the Field, and who can as absolutely dispose of him, as he can of them?

IF I say one presses such sceptical Persons with Questions of this Nature, and obliges them to declare what it is they do believe in these Points, as well as what they do not, they have nothing at all to answer, unless perhaps, that they may not remain wholly speechless, they fly to some exploded Dreams of the old Philosophers, which are far from being satisfactory to themselves, and which they cannot agree about with one another, how lovingly

vingly soever they agree in crying down SERM.
all that other Men account sacred and V.
divine.

Now all the affirmative Creed they have ever yet been pleased to give us, either as to the Original of the World, or the Government of it, comes to one of these Points. Either that it never had a Beginning, and is governed by a fatal Necessity, or, that it both began, and has ever since been governed by meer Chance; or that the World itself is God: Unless you will take this for another Affirmation, which is a Compound of all the Negatives in the World, that a Man can have no sure Knowledge of any Thing.


First, I say, they pretend that the World has been, as it is, from all Eternity, and neither had a Beginning, nor can have an End, that it is preserved by a perpetual Rotation of Matter passing from one Form to another: That all Events are brought to pass by invincible Necessity and unalterable Fate or Destiny, which nothing can resist.

BUT can you imagine any Man in his Senses does in good earnest believe, that

SERM. this Earth we live on has been in the State
 V. it is from all Eternity, which at this Day
 is not wholly peopled, nor altogether
 known, but daily admits of new Discoveries ?

FOR not to speak of *America*, which is but lately known, and vast Regions elsewhere, which were once thought uninhabitable, through the excessive Heat or Cold of the Climate where they lay, but are now sufficiently peopled ; how great a Part even of *Europe* itself, even where it is most temperate, which not many Ages ago was nothing but a vast Desert, I mean the greatest Part of *Germany*, does now abound with flourishing Towns and Cities?


BUT if Mankind had been as numerous some Thousands of Ages ago, as they are at this Time, how came they to suffer themselves to be confined to so narrow a Space, when they might have had so much more Room ? Or if the Numbers of Men encrease, as daily Experience tells us they do encrease, it is certain that by this Time a Thousand Worlds would not contain the Race of Men, though we should

should allow the Encrease but of one SERM.
Man in a Year from Eternity down to V.
this Time. 

AND not only from the late Discovery of it, may we be assured that the World had a Beginning ; but also from the late Invention of Arts and Sciences, as well as of those that still remain a Secret, which give a Spur to our present Industry, and are like to be the Reward of future Ingenuity. Many of those we have lately invented, were too obvious to have lain hid so long, if Men had been searching for them from all Eternity, and too useful and necessary to have been lost again, or fallen into Disuse after they were once found out, unless we could suppose the whole Race of Men to be extinct at once, and the Secrets to have been buried with them. And even on that Supposal, whence should there arise a new Race of Men, after the Species had once failed, but by Creation ?


WE are informed by the most authentick History, we may judge by the Shortness of all other History, which gives us the Transactions but of a few Thousands of Years, by the Improvements that have

SERM. been, and are daily made, in the Administration of Government, the Advancement of Commerce, &c. that the World is but newly made, newly I mean, when we speak with Respect to Eternity.

V.  BUT made it could not be, by any other than an infinitely wise and perfect Author, nor would that Author, renouncing his Title to his own Workmanship, abandon it to a blind Necessity. That the World is not so administered, that all Events come to pass by inevitable Fate, but that some Things do happen one way, which might have fallen out another; there is no Man whose Senses are not all stupified, but may be convinced, not only from the elective Faculty of his own Mind, but even by the Cast of a Dye, the Death of the smallest Insect, or the very Turning of a Balance.

SINCE therefore they must allow, that some Things are contingent, their next Refuge is to *Epicurus's* System, which supposes that all Things are so. Now all Things they tell you are disposed, not by a certain Fate, but by uncertain Chance.

BUT

BUT that a Parcel of senseless Atoms, SERM.
or little Particles of Matter, without any V.
Skill or Knowledge of their own, and 
without the Direction of any intelligent
Being, should, by meer Hazard, jump into
such a wonderful Order, and still subsist
in their first Harmony, is so gross an Ab-
furdity, that I will not waste your Time
in confuting it at large.

I WILL only mention one Thing which
equally destroys the pretended Dominion
both of Fate and Chance, *i. e.* That nei-
ther of them is any real Substance, but
only a meer Name ; and can we think the
World is under such Direction ? Let them
point out to us, if they can, the Person of
either Fate or Chance, or describe, of
what Colour, Shape, or Stature either of
them is. Will those very Persons, who
are so hard to be persuaded that all Things
were made out of Nothing, be yet so cre-
dulous as to imagine, that those very
Things have a meer Nothing for their
Author, and a meer Nothing for their
Governor ? Will they who laugh at others
for their Belief of invisible Powers, ascribe
all Power to such imaginary Chimæras ?

WELL

SERM. WELL then, say they, since it must be
 V. so, we will confess a God. But what
 God will you confess? Why the World or
 Universe, the several Parts whereof we
 think to be Creatures, but take the whole
 together, the $\tau\acute{o}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$, and then 'tis God
 or the Creator.

AND this indeed is the only Deity, which
 the Generality of those Men allow, who
 go by the Name of Deists, which is just
 as if they acknowledged none at all. For
 this is downright Atheism in Effect, by
 whatever Name they may think fit to di-
 stinguish themselves.

FOR according to this Hypothesis too,
 we are at a Loss for some Power superior
 to Man, and more intelligent than he,
 which we can no where find in all this
 visible Frame, as great and magnificent as
 it is. Here we find all the same Difficul-
 ties return upon us, which I before obser-
 ved to arise from the Supposal of the
 World's Eternity, and a Thousand new
 Absurdities and Contradictions besides.

FOR if the World be God, then every
 Thing in the World is a Part of God, every
 Blade of Grass, every Grain of Sand, would
 at

at this Rate, be a Parcel of the Almighty. SERM.
Then God must have a Share in every V.
Thing that is done or suffered by Men, he
must Mistake, and Sin, and Die, nay he
must be Living and Dead at the same
Time, with Abundance more such hope-
ful Consequences. And yet 'tis by being
fond of such miserable and ill-grounded
Conceits as these, that some of our refined
Gentlemen think to give us Proofs of their
Wit and Understanding.

WILL any one then envy the Condition
of such unhappy Wanderers? Will any
one wish to rove like them, without any
Guide, or any Rule, or any settled Pur-
pose, and both to live and die with
no better Expectation than the Beasts that
perish?

LET any one judge how little Reason
they have to scoff at others for trusting to
uncertain Hope, when they themselves
have none at all. And which adds much
to the Unhappiness of their Case, though
they have cast away all Hope, they cannot
cast away their Fear.

SINCE then, as I have shewed in my
Two first Propositions, a Man cannot be
easy

SERM. easy or happy without keeping to some
 V. fixed Belief, and acting according to it, and
 since 'tis impossible for any one to keep to
 the same irreligious Principles, without of-
 ten shifting his Faith and new modelling
 his negative Creed; it will easily follow,
 as I am now to prove in the

Third Place, That the Christian Religion,
 and only that, is founded on such Princi-
 ples, to which 'tis both safe for a Man to
 assent, and possible for him to adhere.

THAT such a Person as *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom we profess to be Christ our Lord, did live at the Time we say he did, that he went about *Judea*, accompanied by Twelve Disciples, and gave out that he was sent from God, to reveal his Will to Mankind; that, to gain Credit to his Doctrine, he did (in Show at least) perform many signal Miracles, foretold many future Events, and, which was the Chief of all, that he himself would rise from the Dead after he had been Three Days in the Grave; that he did openly suffer under *Pontius Pilate*, was crucified, dead and buried, and that on the Day on which he
 had

had told them he would rise, his Body SERM.
could not be found in the Sepulchre, tho' V.
guarded with unusual Diligence by his
Enemies, so as to leave no Room for any
Fraud or Collusion ; that he was seen alive
after this by many who very well knew
him before his Crucifixion ; nor did they
only see, but talk with him and handle
him ; that they publickly declared this, and
that with so great Earnestness, that they
died Martyrs to the Truth of what they
so attested ; that these Things, I say, did so
happen, the most bitter Enemies of Chri-
stianity have readily confessed.

ALL that they pretend on the contrary
is, that the Miracles he seemed to do,
might all be counterfeit, and the Multi-
tude, as they often are, might be imposed
on. But if they had been so, it must be
granted that this could not have been done
without a Confederacy and Combination,
and that his Disciples, who were scarce
ever from him, must have been privy to the
Secret, and engaged in his Designs.

AND can any one persuade himself, that
those very Accomplices, if that had been
the Case, were so foolishly mad, that they
should

SERM. should all of them to a Man so obstinately
 V. persist, even in Prison, on the Rack, in
 the Fire, on the Cross, to declare that ve-
 ry Person to be a wonderful Prophet, the
 true Son of the most high God, nay, the
 most high God himself, invoking him as
 such with their latest Breath, whom at the
 same Time they knew to be a notorious
 Impostor?

It may be possible for History to fur-
 nish us with an Instance or two, of
 some single Person that has stood out to
 the last Extremity in a very unaccounta-
 ble Lye; but out of many Witnesses to
 the same Cause, who were put to the
 Torture in such distant Times and Places,
 so that they could not confer with one
 another, that not one should be prevailed
 with to retract his Testimony; if this
 does not amount to an unexceptionable
 Proof, I see no Rule for Belief among
 Men, nor how it is possible to prove any
 Thing.

I forbear now to urge the uncorrupted
 Purity of Life and Manners both in Christ
 and his Disciples, and how ill they were
 fitted

fitted to set up for Deceivers of the SERM.
World. V.

I say Nothing of the incredible Progress of our Religion through so many Obstructions, without any Assistance of human Wit, without any Force of Arms, without any Countenance from the Civil Power; all which were violently employed against it.

I pass by the wonderful Completion of the Prophecies, and other Arguments of great Weight, because I persuade my self, that whoever seriously considers that one Proof that is drawn from the Testimony of the Apostles, will need no other Conviction.

Now this Religion so well grounded, delivered by so divine an Author to such faithful and upright Ministers, and from them transmitted to us, is not only adorned with such Excellency of Doctrine, to which one may safely give his Assent, but is moreover guarded by such desirable Promises, and such tremendous Threats, that a Man confessing its heavenly Original, may heartily embrace it, and hold fast

to

SERM. to it without ever being shaken, or re-
 V. penting that he is a Christian.

HERE only can the Mind of Man find a sweet Repose, after it has been tired with vain Searching, and puzzled with intricate and cloudy Doubts. Here he may have a sure Rule to trust to, so that he need not disagree with himself, and be carried about from one Opinion to another. Here that immortal Part of us, that perceives it self to be made for Eternity, and dreads Nothing so much as Annihilation, may have a firm Assurance that it shall not die: Here there is a Foundation for Love and Charity, and mutual Offices of Kindness among Men, and mutual Trust and Confidence too, all which Irreligion destroys; so that it is both one's Pleasure and Interest constantly to adhere to it, as many wise Men have done, and still do, to their present Satisfaction and everlasting Benefit, of whom I pray God increase the Number.

IT now remains that I add something by Way of Exhortation. Let me then very earnestly beseech all Men, that they would never be tempted by any Sug-
 fions

ctions whatsoever, to swerve from this most just and perfect Rule, nor be led by a vain Singularity, and an Affectation of seeming wise above the common Rate, into such a Way of thinking as can never make them happy, nor indeed does it so much as promise them they shall be so, but fairly invites them to what they will be sure to find, *viz.* Misery and Despair.

SERM.
V.


THAT they would have Nothing to do with such Men, but leave them to enjoy their own Conceits and curious Discoveries by themselves, who are perversely learned, and witty to their own Torment, and to the great Hazard of their own and their Neighbour's Salvation.

THAT they would look upon those as their worst Enemies, who go about to rob them of their best Ornament and most comfortable Support of Life, and to leave them without Faith or Conscience. Who first throw Dirt upon Religion, and then point at it for being dirty, and would persuade you that those Stains which they have so injuriously cast on it, are inherent in, and inseparable from it. They first

SERM. disturb the Fountain, and then complain,
 V. it is not clear enough to drink at.



WHAT Refuge, what Support do the Abettors of such Principles recommend to the troubled and afflicted, which some Time or other must be every one's Case? What Equivalent to that Trust and Reliance on God, which is the Christian's sure Retreat? Why, in such Case, it is their Doctrine, (and too often their Practice) that when Life is grown uneasy, a Man may lawfully rid himself of it. To the Prevalence of such Notions we may ascribe many of the Self-Murthers for which our Country is become so infamous, as is openly avowed by the Perpetrators of a most complicated Tragedy, fresh in our Memories, who though but in low Life, had learned, it seems, to be as fashionable Deists as any of their Betters, and had so far improved upon the Scheme, as to bring themselves to a Persuasion, that not only their Lives, but that of an innocent Babe, was at their Disposal. Behold a Specimen of that boasted moral Honesty, which is to supply the Place of Revealed Religion!

LET

LET every one then take up for his own Part such a Resolution as this. SERM:
V.

“ AS I have received Christ Jesus for
“ my Lord, so will I walk in him, being
“ fully convinced, that I must either at-
“ tain to Happiness through him, or that
“ there is no Possibility for Man to be
“ happy; and that every Step I have ta-
“ ken from him is so far on my Way to
“ apparent Ruin.

“ THIS holy Religion is like a Light
“ shining in a dark Place, which while I
“ keep before me, I see how to walk, and
“ am in no Danger of Stumbling or of
“ Falling ; but if I turn my Back upon
“ it, there remains Nothing but a dismal
“ Gloominess.

“ THIS is like *Noah's* Ark, that will
“ bear me securely above all Floods ; but
“ if like the Dove, I will fly abroad, I may
“ find Room enough to flutter and beat
“ my Wings in, but, like that, I know I
“ shall be glad to come back to the Ark
“ again, being able to find no other Foot-
“ ing.

SERM.

V.

“ *Adieu* then to them who would de-
 coy me from this Hold by idle Jests and
 trivial Objections. My Faith is a Thing
 of too great Price to be thrown away
 in Sport.

“ LET others take those Scoffers for
 wise and happy Men ; for my Part,
 I am sure they must be stung, as
 often as they reflect on how unequal
 Terms they engage with the Advocates
 for Religion, when they lay their All at
 Stake, and must be for ever miserable
 if they lose their Cause, and yet can be
 no Gainers if they should win. For
 if there should be Nothing after this
 Life, yet a Christian would at least be
 in as good a Condition as they.

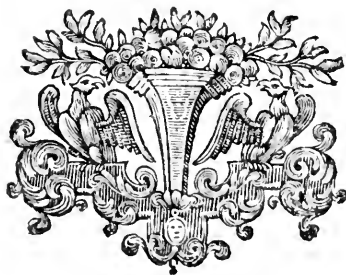
“ IN Spite therefore of all their fly In-
 sinuations, in Spite of all the Stumbling-
 blocks they can throw in my Way, I
 will never cease to believe and act as it
 becomes a Christian.

THESE Resolutions, and such as these,
 take Care to fix well in your Minds, being
 rooted and built up in the Faith, abound-
 ing therein with Thanksgiving ; and as
 the

the Reward of your Firmness and Perse-
verance, you will not fail to receive true
Peace of Mind in this Life, and everlast-
ing Joys in that which is to come.

SERM.
V.
~

*Which God of his infinite Mercy
grant, &c.*





S E R M O N VI.

The Direction of Practice, the true
End of Hearing.



JAM. i. 23, 24.

*For if any be a Hearer of the Word,
and not a Doer, he is like unto a
Man beholding his natural Face
in a Glass : For he beholdeth him-
self, and goeth his way, and
straitway forgettieth what man-
ner of Man he was.*

SERM.
VI.



OUR Apostle, among many o-
ther useful Directions, advises us
in the 19th Verse of this Chap-
ter, that we *be swift to hear* ;
and again, to the same Purpose, Verse 21,
that

that we receive with Meekness the engraft-
ed Word; the Consequence whereof he
tells us will be, the Salvation of our Souls.

SERM.
VI.
~

BUT lest we should so far misunderstand him, as to think we have done enough, in order to the Attainment of eternal Happiness, if we have barely paid an outward Attention to the Word of God; if we have received it with our Ears, but not suffered it to sink down into our Hearts, so as to bring forth in us the Fruit of good Living; he thinks fit farther to subjoin this Caution, *But be ye doers of the Word, and not bearers only, deceiving your own selves.* And what Kind of Self-deceit this is, he proceeds to show us in the Words of my Text, by a very familiar and easy Comparison, *For if any be a Hearer, &c.*

BY *the Word* we are here to understand the revealed Will of God, which his eternal Son came down from Heaven, on purpose to declare to us, and which he most effectually did in those exalted and refined Precepts which he delivered first to his Disciples, and by their Ministry to all succeeding Generations: That Evan-
N 4 gelical

SERM. *g*elical Institution, which the Apostle, in
 VI. the Verse following my Text, calls *the*
perfect Law of Liberty, which was published with a Design, not totally to abolish and out-date, but to complete and refine upon the Old one, by removing whatsoever was burdensome and superfluous in it, and confirming such Things as carried with them an eternal and necessary Obligation, being itself inserted into, and incorporated with them: For which Reason it is probably called *the engrafted Word*, the λόγος ἐμφύσιος.

IN short, by the Word is to be understood, all that it concerns us to believe or practice in order to our present and future Well-being, whether we immediately consult the Letter of Holy Scripture, where our Duty is taught at large and in general Terms, or hear it applied by the Ministers and Dispensers of it to our particular Occasions.

As therefore when we behold ourselves in a Glass, it impartially reflects the outward Features and Lineaments of our natural Visage, in their full Proportion and just Dimensions, so as neither invidiously
 to

to obscure the Ornaments and Graces, nor SERM.
obsequiously conceal the Blemishes and V,
Defects of it; so when we consult the
Word of God, it no less impartially re-
presents to us, in most exact and lively
Colours, the Guise and Complexion of the
inward Man, together with all the Virtues
that beautify and adorn it, and all the Sins
and Imperfections, with which it is sullied
and defaced.

AND consequently he that barely hears,
without ever reducing it to Practice, may
very fitly be compared to a Man that surveys
himself in a Glass, on purpose to observe if
any Thing about him is unseemly or mis-
becoming: and though he cannot but see
something amiss, yet takes no farther Care
to rectify or adjust it.

IT is true, in these Slips and Miscarriages
of lesser Importance, we are usually more
nice and scrupulous, and seldom fail of cor-
recting them, as soon as discovered, for
Fear of exposing ourselves to Scorn and
Laughter. But alas! how easily do we
overlook those monstrous Sins and Impie-
ties which debase and vilify our more no-
ble Part, which blacken and deform the
Soul,

SERM. Soul, and expose us, not to the ridiculous

VI. Censures of a Croud, but to the severest Wrath and Displeasure of an angry God. Though we are never so often, never so seriously admonished of the extreme Turpitude and Enormity of these Offences, though we are told how odious they are in the Sight of God, how mean and unworthy of a rational Creature, and what fatal Consequences they will certainly produce, if we do not speedily forsake and amend them ; yet how rarely does such Advice prevail with us to abandon our beloved Vices, or work in us a Reformation of Manners ! Though we see the Deformity of these Vices reflected in a most terrible and glaring Light, though the Gospel denounces eternal Woe against them, and its Ministers cry aloud and spare not ; yet, in Despite of all Warning, we obstinately persist in our former Evil Practices, and are unable to abstain from the Commission, though we are convinced of the Folly and Danger of them.

IT is natural enough, I confess, for a Man to be somewhat startled and surprized at the Ghastly Figure which he makes, when

when thus exposed in his native Hue and SERM. Complexion, without the Advantage of VI. any counterfeit Graces to cover and palliate his Defects: But however, no sooner does the frightful Image disappear, but the Idea and Remembrance of it is buried too; no sooner has he beheld himself in this spiritual Mirrour, but he goeth his Way, and straitway forgets what Manner of Man he was.

HAVING thus briefly considered the Fitness of the Emblem, which the Apostle here makes Use of to represent a Hearer of the Word and not a Doer; I shall in the farther Prosecution of this Subject insist on the following Particulars.

First, What is the great End and Design of God's Word read or preached, namely, to lay us open to ourselves, and let us see what Manner of Men we are, in order to make us such as we ought to be.

Secondly, To how bad Purposes this excellent Design is perverted and abused by some Sorts of Men.

Thirdly,

SERM. *Thirdly*, I shall conclude with a practical Inference or two.

VI.

First, WHAT is the great End and Design, &c.

Now to this End it greatly contributes, by making a full and ample Discovery of the Nature and Obligation of every Christian Duty, by reminding us of the Covenant between God and us, and frequently inculcating the Terms and Conditions on which our eternal Happiness or Misery depends; and lastly, by putting us on reflecting on our own Actions, by which Means each individual Person may be made truly sensible how far he, for his Part, is entitled to those Promises that are annexed to the Performance, and wherein obnoxious to that Punishment, which will infallibly attend the Violation of them.

HITHER therefore must every one, who is at any Uncertainty, as to his spiritual State and Condition, have Recourse, from whence he may make a true Estimate of it, how far he is advanced in his Progress toward Heaven, or how near the
Confines

Confines of Hell, and in which of them SERM.
he has just Reason to expect his Portion. VI.

THIS supplementary Revelation of God's Will might indeed have very well been spared, had Man retained his original Integrity; for then the Laws of Reason would have been sufficient to have directed each particular Person in all the Actions of his Life. But since the Corruption of our Nature by the Fall of our first Parents, those Laws have been so impaired, that there are very few, who, by the Light of their in-bred Knowledge, can distinguish true and solid Reason, from that which is false and counterfeit: And fewer yet of those that can discern between Good and Evil, who are endued with the clearest Notions, and fullest Perception of their Duty, will be fair and impartial Judges in their own Cause; they will readily enough own, that such or such Actions are base and dishonourable, that they make us degenerate from Men to Brutes, that they are inconsistent with the Dictates both of Reason and Religion, and extremely distasteful both to God and Man,


THEY

SERM. THEY will severely censure and condemn the Practice of them in others:

VI. And on the contrary, they never fail to give Virtue its deserved Applause: They are big with the Praises of such Persons as are most eminent for their Piety, and remarkable for a strict and religious Deportment, who have walked uprightly, and maintained a clear and unblemished Character in the midst of a stubborn Generation, who have preserved a good Conscience in spite of all the Temptations of sensual Delights and worldly Grandeur.

BUT then, as if all Religion consisted in nice and empty Speculations, in magnifying Virtue, and crying down Immorality, they never apply these Notions to their own Case; nor consider how nearly they themselves are concerned in them, how widely their Words and Actions disagree, and how shamefully they offend against those very Rules which they prescribe to others.

As for their own Failings and Infirmities, though of never so high a Nature, they either wholly pass them by, without any Heed or Attention, or else extenuate
and

and soften them with some little Evasion, SERM.
or shroud them under some shallow and VI.
insufficient Pretence; as if the self-same 
Thing which in others is a heinous Of-
fence and Provocation, were none at all
in them; or that by a peculiar Favour and
Indulgence of God, they were absolved
from their Obedience to those Laws, by
which the rest of Mankind is indispensably
obliged.

SINCE therefore Men will not reflect on
their own Miscarriages with the same Se-
verity they usually do on those of others;
since some are so blind that they cannot,
and others so stubborn that they will not
see them; since if they were left to them-
selves, there are some who would never
think at all, and others who would always
think amiss of their spiritual Condition, by
persuading themselves that their Case is
less dangerous than in Reality it is; it is
highly requisite, in order to rectify that
erroneous and deceitful Judgment which
we are apt to pass in our own Favour,
that we should make frequent Appeals,
and submit our Cause to the fair and un-
bias'd Decision of those written and re-
vealed

SERM. vealed Truths, which were delivered to us
 VI. as a sure and infallible Guide in all our
 Doubts and Emergencies, and to be the
 settled Standard and Criterion of Good and
 Evil.

GREAT therefore are those sacred
 Truths, and mighty above all Things,
 abundantly sufficient to instruct us in that
 most useful Knowledge of ourselves, to re-
 move the causeless Fears and Jealousies of
 good Men, and to quash the presumptu-
 ous Hopes and groundless Confidence of
 bad ones.

FROM hence only can we raise in our-
 selves a firm Assurance of our own Inte-
 grity ; insomuch that he who governs his
 Life, and measures his Actions by any
 other Rule, who seeks for Comfort either
 from the good Opinion of others, who
 not being able to discern that Treachery
 and Deceitfulness of Heart which lurks
 under a fair Outside and Form of Godli-
 ness, may, through a mistaken Charity,
 be induced to judge more favourably of
 him than he deserves ; or else from the
 infinite Mercy and Goodness of God, which
 is not promised, nor will be granted on
 any

any other Terms than those of a true lively SERM.
Faith, and an universal Obedience ; if he VI.
sets up some other Guide in Opposition to
God's known and indispenfable Laws, by re-
lying either on the uncertain Conduct of
human Reason, or else on some counter-
feit Rapture and Enthusiaftick Heat, a
Pretence to a more than ordinary Measure
of the Spirit, and the preternatural Infu-
fions of divine Light ; that Man's Reli-
gion is vain, his Hope unwarrantable, and
both are built on a very weak and fandy
Foundation.

IN fhort, if we really have a Mind to
know whose Subjects we are, to whose
Kingdom we belong, and whether we are
chiefly influenced by the Fear of God,
and a true Senfe of Religion, or by the In-
ftigations of Satan, and the enticing Al-
lurements of Flefh and Senfe ; let every
Man put himself upon this Trial.

“ I FIND my self obliged by the ftrictest
“ Ties, and under the fevereft Penalties,
“ to the Obfervance of the Divine Ordi-
“ nances ; in Obedience whereunto, I
“ must perform fuch Duties, and abftain
“ from fuch unlawful Pleafures. Are my

SERM. “ Actions agreeable to this Rule ? Have I
 VI. “ performed what is thus enjoyned, and
 “ refrained from that which is so prohi-
 “ bited ; or where I have been guilty of
 “ a Breach, have I been careful to repair
 “ it again by a hearty and cordial Repen-
 “ tance ? If so, I may certainly conclude
 “ that I am a Child of God, and in the
 “ direct Way that leads to Happiness and
 “ Salvation. But if otherwise, I am in
 “ the broad Way that leads to Destruction,
 “ and can lay no Claim to the Promises
 “ of the Gospel : But whether the one or
 “ the other, I have certainly got this Ad-
 “ vantage, by thus referring my self to
 “ the Word of God ; that although the
 “ Heart is deceitful above all Things,
 “ and desperately wicked, which made
 “ the Prophet ask with so much Diffi-
 “ dence and Distrust, *Who can know it ?*
 “ I am able to answer with a just Confi-
 “ dence and reasonable Assurance, As de-
 “ ceitful and wicked as it is, I both
 “ can, and do know it”.

You see then what is the great End and Design of the Gospel, that (if duly consulted and attended to) it is purposely framed

med to make us wiser, and by means of SERM.
that Wisdom to make us better: That it VI.
sets both our Vertues and Vices in their
true and proper Light, together with all
the powerful Motives and Persuafives in-
viting to the one, and the severe and fatal
Judgments deterring from the other.

AND surely would but Men endeavour
seriously to convince themselves, as often
as they repair to the House of God, how
great, how useful, how necessary a Work
they are undertaking, would they come
with honest Hearts, with humble Minds
and cordial Dispositions, duly prepared,
and willing to be informed of such Things
as they did not know, or to be put in Re-
membrance of such as they had forgot,
or did not sufficiently attend to; would
they apply the Word of God to the true
Use for which it was intended; it would
have a greater Influence on their Manners,
and they would give more evident and
sensible Proofs of it in their Lives and
Conversation, than they generally do; they
would not hear, nor should we preach to
so little Purpose, nor should we have so
much Reason to complain that some Men,

SERM. instead of reaping any Benefit from our
 VI. Doctrine, do only employ it to their own
 Ruin and Destruction, as will farther appear
 under my

Second Particular, where I am to show, to how bad Purposes] this excellent Design is perverted and abused by some Sorts of Men.

As for those who wholly neglect and live in open Defiance to the external Ordinances of Religion, who either are too proud to think they need any Instructions, or too much addicted to their Pleasures, to allot any Part of their Time to the Service of God; they do not fall under my present Consideration, both because the not using a Thing cannot so properly be called an Abuse of it, and also because it would be a vain and superfluous Attempt, to direct my Discourse to such Persons, whom the very Supposal of their not being so much as Hearers of the Word, excludes from being any Part of my Auditory.

LEAVING therefore such Wretches as are obstinately deaf to all Advice, to their
 own

own voluntary Blindness, and the miserable State of Ignorance and Insensibility, in which they lie buried, let us pass on to those, who though they do hear the Word, and that frequently, yet it is either to no Purpose at all, or else a very ill one.

SERM.
VI.


AND here the first I shall take Notice of, are the barren and unfruitful Hearers, [as being the Men, who are more immediately aimed at in my Text:] Men who pay a constant Attendance at the Places of publick Worship, who are willing enough to receive the Word, and listen to their Teachers, but like a degenerate and unthankful Soil, they make no Returns, nor answer the Care and Labour that is bestowed in cultivating and manuring them. Now under this Sort are comprehended, not only the Supine and inadvertent, the listless and unthinking Hearers, who are affected with the Sound, but not at all with the Sense of what is spoken, who tho' present in Body, are absent in Spirit; but too many of those also, who give greater Attention, who pay a due Respect and Veneration to the Word, and apply the distinguishing Marks of a good or a


O 3 bad

SERM. bad Man to their own particular Persons.
VI.



No sooner do we describe the Nature of some mortal and contagious Vice, and show what is the Rise and Progress, and what the Symptoms of it, but they begin to reflect, whether they themselves are free from the Infection or not; no sooner do we represent a proud and imperious, a malicious and revengeful, a lewd and intemperate Man, but many a guilty Wretch, whose Conscience stares him in the Face, looks back with Horror on his own Actions, and cannot forbear to say within himself,

“ I AM that base unworthy Man whose
 “ Character is here displayed; that Pride
 “ and Cruelty, those Excesses and Enor-
 “ mities are all my own, the odious Pic-
 “ ture resembles me too nearly, and every
 “ Feature is as like, as if it were drawn
 “ on Purpose for me.” Now such Men
 as these do indeed truly answer the first
 Part of that great End and Design of the
 Word before-mention’d, inasmuch as it
 serves them for a Glass, by inspecting
 whereof, they become truly sensible what
 Manner

Manner of Men they are. But then, as SERM.
to the other Part of it, the making them VI.
such as they ought to be, they render it 
wholly ineffectual ; they only take a short
and transitory View, lively enough per-
haps for the present, but which leaves no
lasting and substantial Images behind it,
produces no Effects beyond itself, and all
its Impressions terminate in the very Act
of beholding.

AND what a Pity is it, when a Man is
arrived thus far, and has made so confi-
derable a Progress in the Christian Race,
when he is convinced of the sick and
languishing Estate of his Soul, and sees by
what Means it is continually wasted and
impaired, and what is the only sure and
effectual Remedy, by which it can be re-
covered : When he is grown patient of
Reproof, of a teachable Disposition, when
he can hear, without Offence, the most
severe and bitter Invectives against his dar-
ling Lufts, when he can hear the impeni-
tent Sinner branded with the Marks of
Folly, Brutishness and Madness, and con-
fess that he himself deservedly falls under
those ungrateful Characters ; what a Pity

SERM. is it, I say, that, after all this, he should
 VI. stop so soon, without profiting by his
 Conviction, without digesting his pious Resolutions into Action, without reforming any one of those Vices, which he has so heartily acknowledged and bewailed !

AND yet so it is : For though the Word of God is so powerful and prevailing that it will sometimes extort such Confessions even from Men of corrupt and dissolute Lives, yet, on the other Hand, so alluring are the Temptations of the World, the great Enemy of Mankind so watchful for our Ruine, the Propensity of a vicious Nature, and the Sway of evil Custom so hard to be resisted, that they frequently baffle the Measures, and elude the Holy Purposes of such as are not well armed with Courage and Constancy against them, and make them relapse into those very Sins, which but just before they had solemnly renounced.

THUS do Men divide between God and their Lusts, each of which does by turns lose and regain the Ascendant over them : But with this Difference, that they think they have done enough, if they have paid
 God

God a few empty Acknowledgements, SERM. VI.
whilst they dedicate almost their whole Life, and all the Studies and Endeavours of it, to the Service of their disorderly Appetites, and the Gratifications of Sense.

IT cannot indeed be denied, but that to know and be convinced of one's Errors, is one great Step toward the Amendment of them: But yet how likely a Means soever it may seem, it is certain it very often fails. *Saul* could readily enough acknowledge, that *David* was more righteous than he, in that he had requited him Good for Evil. But though he was persuaded of his Innocence, the Spirit of Envy soon returned upon him, so that he could not forbear to persecute that righteous Man, and seek the Life of him, by whom he knew and confessed his own to have been spared.

JUST thus vain and ineffectual is the Remorse and Compunction of every irresolute and unstable Christian. When he hears the Nature of God and his Attributes explained, how his Mercy tempers the Severity of his Justice, how heartily he hates the Sin, and yet how tenderly he loves

SERM. loves the Sinner, how we daily forfeit his
 VI. Favour, and how he daily remits the For-
 feiture; during, I say, this impartial Pro-
 spect and Survey of the Goodness of God
 and his own Unworthiness, like the Skirt
 which *David* held up, it twits and up-
 braids him with his ungenerous Proceed-
 ing. He looks on himself as something
 of a very savage and untractable Kind,
 that could continue to rebel against so in-
 dulent and gracious a Master, that could
 not be softened or civilized by such win-
 ning Usage and obliging Treatment.

BUT as soon as Time and Company
 have worn off these Impressions of his
 Guilt, such melancholy Thoughts and Self-
 accusations are succeeded by Reflections
 of quite another Nature. He then re-
 assumes his former Confidence, and begins
 thus to expostulate with himself. "Where
 " is that foul mishapen Monster which I
 " just now beheld? I am no Wolf nor
 " Tyger, no wild Inhabitant of the De-
 " sert, but endued with a human Shape
 " and Faculties, a Man, wherein Humani-
 " ty most properly consists, a Rational
 " and a Sociable," could'st thou but have
 added,

added, "and a Religious," Creature, thou hadst argued rightly ; for that is the noblest Prerogative of Man, to be the Servant and Subject of God.


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VI.


BUT any Excuse will serve to silence the Clamours, and allay the dismal Apprehensions of an awakened Conscience, so willing are we to be cheated in a Matter of the utmost Consequence, so easily do the deceitful Pleasures of Sin disguise us from ourselves, and by so doing choak the good Seed which was sown in us, and make it become unfruitful.

AND thus much for these Men, who hear the Word of God to little or no Purpose ; but these however are more tolerable than others, who employ it to ill Uses : Of which Sort are

THOSE Persons, who repair to religious Assemblies, not with a Design either to please God, or to be improved and bettered by what they hear, but in order to gain themselves a Reputation, and pass upon the World for Men of Conscience and Integrity, that so they may with greater Ease, and less Suspicion, commit the most base and treacherous Actions,
whilst

SERM. whilst the Perfidiousness of their Hearts is

VI.  hid under a seemingly demure and sanctified Behaviour. I do not deny but that it is lawful, and in many Cases a necessary Duty incumbent on us, to make an outward Profession of our Piety, *to let our Light shine before Men*, openly to avow, nay, even to boast of our good Deeds, provided our glorying be in the Lord, if we do it not thro' a vain Ostentation, but with a pious Zeal and sincere Endeavour to excite and invigorate others by our good Example, to the Practice of the like Duties.

OUR Saviour compares his Church to a City built upon a Hill, and consequently he that ascends thither, cannot well, neither ought he to avoid being conspicuous, that he may animate and encourage others to come up after him. But he that comes thither with no other Design but to be seen of Men, who makes that his principal End, which ought at best but to be an occasional and subordinate one, might much better have staid below.

IT is a Piece of dangerous Mockery and Trifling with God, to make a Show of
pleasing

pleasing him, while we are labouring to please Men ; to make his Glory the Pre-
tence, while our own is at the Bottom.

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But how bold soever such Men may make with him now, they will one Day find to their Cost, who it is they have thus impudently dallied with, when he shall pull off their Disguise, expose their most crafty Villanies and Impostures to the View and Scorn of the Universe, and appoint them their Portion with their Fellow-Hypocrites.

AND now my Subject would naturally lead me to another Sort of perverse Hearers, Men openly profane and irreligious, who are not contented to contemn the Almighty in private, unless they insult him too in publick by a rude and irreverent Behaviour in his House : Men who turn the Grace of God itself into Lasciviousness, and suck out Poison from the most wholesome Nourishment : Who come together not for Edification, but for Destruction, not as Members or Profelytes, but as Spies, in Hopes they shall discover some Nakedness in the Land, and furnish themselves with Arguments, not to support


SERM. port their own Faith, but to overthrow
VI. that of others.



THE Scripture is fitly compared by the Apostle to a two-edged Sword, it is bright and sharp enough to defend the Truth against all Gain-sayers, when in the Hands of one who is both able and willing to use it right ; for otherwise, with that very Sword an unskilful Man may wound himself, and a malicious Man may destroy others. They may, I say, and I wish we have not too many Instances that they do so too.

BUT I hope I shall not need to use any Invectives, to possess you with a just Abhorrence of such Proceedings ; for I am willing to believe, that none who hears me this Day, is come with so bad a Purpose. And I hope that none of us will envy such profane Scoffers the imaginary Satisfaction of laughing for a few Moments, who considers what the End of it will be, that they must weep and howl to all Eternity,

I SHALL now conclude all with two short Inferences. And,

1. SINCE, as has been shewn in my SERM.
first Particular, the Word of God is di- VI.
rected to so good an End, since from a 
true Use of it so much Benefit may be
received, let us take the Advice of the
Apostle in the Chapter of my Text, *and
be swift to hear*; let us omit no Opportu-
nity of improving our selves in that spiri-
tual Knowledge, nor forsake the assem-
bling ourselves together, as the Manner
of some is. Let us duly esteem and value
our own Privilege, that in the great Con-
cern of our Souls, we are not abandoned
to the unsteddy Conduct of our own ca-
pricious Fancy and Humour, not given up
to wild and irregular Wandrings, nor left
in a dark Uncertainty. But that we have,
as *St. Peter* says, *2 Epist. i. 19. a sure
Word of Prophecy* [to trust to] *whercunto
ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light
that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day
dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your
Hearts*: That by the Help of this bright
and auspicious Light we may not only see
our Way as it lies before us, but if we
look back through those several Stages we
have

SERM. have already passed, we may clearly discern, whether we are come right thus far or not, whether we have kept all along in the direct Way to Heaven, or have declined into Error and Disobedience. And if upon a careful Retrospection, we perceive that our Steps have gone out of the Way, that we have so fair a Prospect of rectifying our Mistake, and by a seasonable Warning of our Danger, are made ashamed of our foolish Aims and unworthy Pursuits. Nor let any Man absent himself from the Congregation of the Faithful, and deprive himself of such spiritual Instruction, from a Perswasion that he does not need it, and is already sufficiently instructed. But though the Advantages of Hearing are so great, and the Design so good, yet since, as has been likewise shewn, that excellent Design may so many ways be perverted and abused, it is necessary that I farther Caution you in the

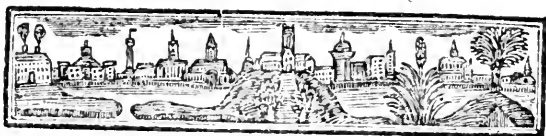
Second Place, To take Heed how you hear, *i. e.* come not hither with a careless Indifference, with drowsiness and oscitancy,

tancy, but with a heedful Application of SERM.
Mind, and Intention of Thought. Come VI.
not to be seen of Men, but by him who
seeth in Secret, and will reward openly.
Come not merely because it is the Cus-
tom, or to pass away a Leisure Hour or
two you would otherwise be at a Loss to
dispose, but through a just Sense of the
great and urgent Need you have of being
instructed in, or at least admonished of
your Duty, though it be never so well
known. Come not to applaud the Per-
formance or condemn the Insufficiency of
the Preacher, but to edify and improve
by his Doctrine, how meanly soever it is
delivered. In a Word, come not barely
to see your Faults, but to correct and a-
mend them ; be not content to receive
the Word, but moreover retain and che-
rish it ; suffer no dead unactive Notions
to lye dormant in you, but vigorously ex-
ert them ; so shall you partake of the Blef-
sing promised by the Apostle in the Verse
following my Text. *But whoſo looketh*
into the perfect Law of Liberty, and con-
VOL. III. P *tinueth*

SERM. *tinueth therein, he being not a forgetful*

VI. *Hearer, but a Doer of the Work, that Man
shall be blessed in his Deed.*





S E R M O N VII.

The Folly of Ill Men, in reproaching
the Good.




I PET. IV. 4, 5.

*Wherein they think it strange that
you run not with them to the same
Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of
you : Who shall give Account to
him that is ready to judge the
Quick and the Dead.*



HERE is nothing in this Pas-
sage so doubtful or obscure, as
to require any Paraphrase or
Explication : The Meaning of
the Place discovers itself at the first View,
and needs no Help of the Context or De-
finition

SERM.
VII.

SERM. finition of the Terms to make it plainer
 VII. You may easily conceive that some very
 gross and enormous Crimes had been mentioned in the precedent Verse, which make up that Excess of Riot spoken of in this, in which whilst some Men continued to indulge themselves without Check or Controul, whilst they were revelling in the Height of their imaginary Enjoyments, they thought it strange that any should be so dull and phlegmatick, as not to join in their Mirth, and bear a part in their Extravagance. Thus a Madman and Persons in their Senses are equally Monsters to one another, and whilst they stand gazing at his fantastical Freaks and ridiculous Gestures, he wonders no less at their Sobriety and Composedness, and looks with a scornful Pity on those ignorant unhappy Wretches, who know nothing of the Pleasure of raving, of swaying invisible Scepters, and ruling imaginary Kingdoms. They think it strange, says the Apostle, that you run not with them to the same Excess, and not only so, but they speak Evil of you.

THIS is a Treatment, which Persons of strict Morals, and an upright Conversation must always expect to meet with from the lewd and dissolute. And he that is resolved to be remarkably good and virtuous, in Defiance of prevailing Custom, and in the midst of a degenerate Age, must expect to be ill used, and prepare himself against the Attempts of ungodly and malicious Persons. Such has always been the Fate of eminent Virtue and a distinguishing Degree of Piety, as to expose a Man to the Censure and Hatred of those, who notwithstanding inwardly reverence and esteem it. Need I prove this to you by Instances of sacred or prophane History, or lead you back to the Chronicles of those illustrious Worthies of St. *Paul* to be convinced, that though they wrought Righteousness, and stopt the Mouths of Lions, they could never stop that of Envy and Detraction? Or does not every Man's Experience and Observation sufficiently convince him, that this is the Case even in our own Times, and that he who pretends to a greater Measure of Holiness than his Neighbours, had Need stand well on his

SERM.
VII.
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SERM. Guard, if he hopes to escape the Lash of  
 VII. Slanderous and defaming Tongues. I shall  
 take it for granted then, that the Case is  
 true in Fact, and proceed to the following  
 Enquiries.

*First*, How it comes to pass, that loose  
 and profligate Persons are always re-  
 proaching and calumniating good  
 ones.

*Secondly*, What Sort of Reproaches they  
 usually cast upon them.

*Thirdly*, How a wise and good Man  
 ought to behave himself under such  
 Calumny.

*Fourthly*, What will be the Event here-  
 after of such an Enmity to God and  
 Goodness: *They must give Account to  
 him that is ready to judge the Quick  
 and Dead.*

*First*, How it comes to pass, that loose  
 and profligate Persons are always reproach-  
 ing and calumniating good ones. Would  
 not

not

not one on the contrary imagine, that a good Man, whose Principle (if really so) it is to shew an universal Benevolence, and to promote, as far as he is able, the Interest and Happiness of all he converses with; who is ready upon every Occasion to assist and befriend his Neighbours with all the good Offices in his Power, and never provokes them by any ill ones; would not one imagine, I say, that such a Person as this should be the Darling of all that know him, and be looked upon as the common Friend or Parent, instead of being detested as the common Enemy?

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BUT here indeed lies the great Provocation; the Generality of Mankind are vicious and depraved, and so long as they are herded in a Croud, and meet with none much better than themselves, they can go on in their Course without Disturbance or Interruption, they can offend without blushing, and sin without Remorse. Whereas if some bright and illustrious Pattern of Piety and true Worth shall happen to arise among them, (as, blessed be God! some such Examples are not wanting even in a corrupt and lascivious Generation,

SERM. generation,) when a Merit so eminently superior is placed so near them, that a comparison between them cannot be avoided, they perceive themselves so shamefully foiled, and their Blemishes appear so remarkable both to themselves and others, that they cannot bear the disgraceful Parallel, and therefore with an ungenerous Emulation, which aspires not to rise to his Character, but to bring his down to a Level with their own, they make it their Business by all the little Arts of Malice and Insinuation to detract from his true Worth, and put false Colours on his Actions. Let his real Desert be never so great, so long as it is the Means of making their Faults conspicuous, they think they have no great Reason to thank him for it, they look upon his Reputation as built upon the Ruin of theirs, and those just Commendations, which are given him by Men of Sense and Probity, as a Satyr (and indeed they are so in Effect) upon themselves: and as their own Conscience cannot chuse but condemn them in the Things which they allow, so they are sensible that he condemns them also in not allowing the same

same Things: and therefore it seems to them a piece of just and necessary Revenge to revile him by their Words, who reviles them by his Actions: And the Sense of that Shame which he thus reflects on them by his Example, outweighs all other Considerations of the Advantages of his Friendship and the Benefits of his Conversation. Thus Men, whose Deeds are dark, and will not bear to be exposed to open View, hate even the Sun that lights and warms them, because it discovers what they had rather have concealed. By such continual Discouragements they hope at last to make him weary of his Virtue, and to gain him over to their Party, or at least that they shall hinder others from joining him, so as still to keep a Number on their Side, and not be forced to be as singular in Vice as he is in Virtue. So unwilling are ill Men to strive for the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, and so industrious to keep out others that are entering in. Though they advance but slowly in the Race themselves, they care not to be outstript, and he that is so active as to get the start of them, shall be sure of their Endeavours to pull him

SERM. him back. So difingenuouſly do theſe
 VII. Men labour to ſpoil others rather than
 mend themſelves, and decry that Virtue they
 dare not imitate. I come now in the

Second Place, to conſider what Sort of Reproaches they uſually caſt upon good Men. I ſhall not pretend to enumerate all the various Artifices, which ingenious Malice has invented to blaſt the Character and fully the Reputation of conſcientious and pious Chriſtians, moſt of which are dark and crooked like their Author, and like him their Name is Legion. However there are three more obvious and principal Methods, by which ſuch Inſtruments of his do more frequently proceed, all which I ſhall briefly conſider. And they are the upbraiding the ſincere Profeſſors of Religion with the Character either of Cowards, or Hypocrites, or laſtly, of moroſe and unfociable Perſons.


Fiſt, They aſperſe them as Cowards or timorous Perſons, *i. e.* if a Man has any Fear of God, or Senſe of Religion left, and will not partake in every extravagant Adventure, nor run with them to the ſame Exceſs of Riot, he ſhall be ridiculed

as one of no Courage or Confidence, one that is scared by a few idle Stories, and has so little Sense as to believe the fabulous Traditions of Religion and another Life.

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BUT certainly a well-grounded Fear and reasonable Caution, was never by any wise Man accounted Cowardise. Is he a Coward, who goes out of his Way to avoid a dangerous Pit, and does not throw himself headlong into it? Or he, that shuts up his Doors at Night to keep out Thieves and Robbers? Or he, that lays up Provision for himself and Family against a Time of Scarcity? Or he, that has Recourse to proper Remedies, when he feels the Symptoms of an approaching Distemper? Is not such a Fear as this interwoven in our very Frame as a necessary Preservative of Life, by giving Nature a seasonable Alarm, and putting her on her Guard? And is not the Soul of infinitely greater Value than the Body, and consequently an Apprehension of miscarrying in so tender a Part much more justifiable? Nay indeed what can justify the Want of such an Apprehension?

SERM. So that the Libertine after all is that
 VII. arrantest Coward, who is afraid to fear
 what he ought to fear. He cannot stand
 the Shock of such dismal Imaginations,
 and therefore chuses rather to rush blind-
 fold into the Danger, than manfully en-
 deavour to escape it. Shall he be reputed
 Valiant, who cannot bear up under a lit-
 tle present Uneasiness, nor undergo the
 necessary Discipline of a short Vacation
 from Pleasures? Who has not the Courage
 to despise what he knows to be despicable,
 nor dares to vindicate what he sees and
 knows to be truly honourable? No cer-
 tainly, a Man that will thus poorly belie
 his Principles, and act in Defiance of his
 own Judgment, only for fear of being
 thought a Coward, deserves that Charac-
 ter he so solicitously avoids. His Courage
 (as he calls it) which was never shewn
 but in drunken Broils, and lewd Ren-
 counters, is generally owing to his Con-
 stitution, and proceeds from an Opinion
 of his Strength of Limbs, and the Tough-
 ness of his Composition. But as that
 wears away, his Valour declines in Pro-
 portion with it; and we often see these
 blustering

blustring Hectors, who carry all Things SERM.
by dint of Force, and over-awe their VII.
Neighbours into a Compliance with their 
Humour, when once their Body is ener-
vated, and consequently their Mind (which
had no other Support but the Hardiness of
the other) dispirited, become at last such
abject Wretches, as to deserve the Pity of
those, to whom before they were a Ter-
ror.

BUT a true Christian's Valour is founded
on a surer Bottom, and is not to be bro-
ken by such petty Discouragements: His
Resolution grows stronger as his bodily
Strength decays, and he looks Death and
Misfortunes in the Face with a decent As-
surance and manly Confidence.

ONE of the principal Marks of Forti-
tude is, that it be steady, uniform, and
constant, which certainly belongs in a
more peculiar Manner to such as are most
Vigorous and Active in the Course of
Piety and Virtue.

HE that is bold and resolute in oppo-
sing Vice, can never have any Reason to
wish he had acted otherwise: Whereas he
that is bold in the Commission of it, will
one

SERM. one Day be glad to retract his Errors, and
 VII. ask Pardon for his Miscarriages (which,
 if you will believe his own Notions of Honour, is no great Argument of Bravery.)

ANOTHER Property of Fortitude is, that it be rational and proportioned to our Strength and Abilities: To attempt Things impossible, and which far exceed the Reach of our natural Powers, is not Courage, but Rashness and Temerity; nay, it is Rage and Frenzy. Now whether the daring Sinner, that fights with Heaven, or the Religious Hero, that combats Hell, is most rational in his Enterprizes, I shall not need to determine.

IN Summ, That Fear is only scandalous and disgraceful, which is causeless, and without any just Grounds. But such is not that of a good Man: He knows what, and whom, and why he fears. It is *the Wicked that flies when none pursue, but the Righteous is bold as a Lion.* So that upon the whole Matter it appears, that Vice is the worst Cowardise, and the Fear of God the truest Valour.

BUT,

BUT, 2dly, Another Name of Ignominy which irreligious Men are wont to cast on the Professors of true Piety, is, that of Hypocrites : And this Character indeed we cannot pretend to retort upon themselves, as we did that of Cowardise. For, to give them their due, they have as much Religion as they pretend to, *i. e.* none at all. Nay perhaps they have more than they will own, and whilst they renounce it with their Tongue, believe it in their Heart, which has been the Case of many of them by their own Confession. There have indeed been too many, who by a Life ill suited to the large Professions they made of a more than ordinary Sanctity, and such Practices in Secret, as were very inconsistent with the Character they assumed in publick, by making a Gain of Godliness, and prostituting Religion to secular Ends, have too much contributed to such Aspersions, and given too fair a Handle for such uncharitable Censures.

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VII.

BUT because there will be Knaves in all Disguises, shall we thence conclude that there is no Man honest? If we were always

SERM. ways to argue at this Rate, there would
 VII. be an End of that mutual Confidence between Man and Man, and all civil Correspondence must cease. It is very difficult, I confess, to discover the inward Sentiments of another, and to be sure that he means what he professes: However, every Man has a natural Right to be well thought of, till by the Insincerity of his outward Behaviour he has forfeited that Right. It is possible, indeed, that all his good Actions may proceed from corrupt Motives, his seeming Devotion may be directed to some worldly Prospect, and his Charity may be all Ostentation (for which, if so, he will be one Day severely accountable to the great Searcher of Hearts, who will appoint him his Portion with his Fellow Hypocrites.) However, in the meantime, the Libertine has very little Reason to reproach him, for as much as his Actions at least are commendable and beneficial, whatever his Intentions are, whereas he himself neither acts nor means well.

It is certain they are both bad enough in Conscience, and I shall not now dispute whether of the two is worse, or which

which of them does Religion the most SERM.
Harm, the openly profane, or the dissem- VII.
bling Hypocrite, who though he may
accidentally be the Author of much Good,
may promote the Cause of Piety, and by
his seeming Godliness excite others to be
really holy and devout, so long as he pas-
ses undiscovered ; yet when once his Dis-
guise is off, he gives it a deep and dange-
rous Wound : Then every good Man's
Sincerity is called in Question, they are
all equally taken for such false Pretenders,
and suspected of the same hidden Vices of
which the other is convicted.

AN Hypocrite indeed is a very odious
and reproachful Name, which makes some
Men so immoderately careful to avoid it,
that they are resolved to have Nothing at
all to do with Virtue, lest it should be
mistaken for Hypocrisy ; which is as if a
Man should throw away a Jewel of great
Value, for fear it should be taken for a
Counterfeit.

THIS is a fatal Rock on which many
have split, and one of the most successful
Engines the Devil and his Accomplices
ever made use of to discountenance true

SERM. Religion. A Man whose Behaviour has
VII. been so upright and unblameable, as to
be obnoxious to no other Censure, is al-
ways liable to this, if Men will have so
little Conscience as to fasten the Imputation
on him. Besides, some Actions are of
such an indifferent middle Nature, and so
undistinguishable by their outward Ap-
pearances, that according to the different
Intention wherewith they are performed,
they may be denominated either virtuous
or vicious ; so that in this Case, a Man
that acts with never so honest a Design, is
still at the Mercy of others, who are at
Liberty to believe what they think fit.
All that an innocent Person is capable of
doing, in order to clear himself from
such a false Suggestion, is, by Simpli-
city and Candour in his Words, by O-
penness and Integrity in his Actions, to
give the best Demonstration he can of a
sound Heart and sincerè Intention. But if
after all Men will still be so unreasonably
suspicious, as without Cause, and against
Proof, to doubt of his Honesty, and charge
him with a latent Hypocrisy, he must
quietly submit to the unjust Reproach, and
comfort

comfort himself with the Assurance, that SERM.
though they can blacken him before Men, VII.
and stain his Reputation, yet so long as he
is conscious of his own inward Purity,
they cannot disturb the Peace of his own
Breast, nor make him appear as deformed
to himself, as they have represented him
to the World ; that his own Heart does
not condemn him, to which he can ap-
peal with a just Confidence, and to God,
who is greater than his Heart, and know-
eth all Things: The

3d and last Mark of Infamy I shall in-
sist on, by which debauched and dissolute
Persons endeavour to discourage others
from the Profession and Practice of Reli-
gion, is, the upbraiding them as morose
and unsociable Men. How far some false
Pretenders to severe Morals and strict Dis-
cipline may deserve this Imputation, is a-
nother Question ; who set up for reforming
others with no other Qualification, but a
peevish Temper, and ungovernable Zeal,
without a sufficient Stock of Piety to cor-
rect the one, or Prudence to direct the
other ; who abstain indeed from carnal,
but give themselves up to spiritual Lusts :

SERM. They are far enough from Intemperance
 VII. and Lewdness, but they make no Scruple
 of being debauch'd with Pride, and drunk
 with Rage ; and whilst they chain up the
 concupiscible Appetites, they let the irascible
 loose : They seek not the Sinner's Reformation,
 but his Ruin, and would be strangely disappointed
 if all Mankind should take them at their Word,
 and live up to their own Rules, because there
 would be no Matter of Scandal left, nor Subject
 of Complaint ; there would be none, whose
 Vices they might impute to themselves as
 Virtues, and over whom they might insult
 with a Pharisaical Pride, and say, *I am not
 as this Publican.* Such Men, I say, there are,
 and their ill Humour (as it usually happens)
 is made a general Case, and the Reflection
 is cast on all without Distinction, who
 pretend to regulate the Manners of the Age,
 and to make Men wiser and better by their
 Instructions, they are called morose and
 unsociable.

THIS, I confess, is a Character a Man
 would not be very fond of, could he fairly
 and honestly avoid it, and many a righteous
 Man is willing to compound with
 them

them for their good Word, by a Compliance with their Humour in such Things as he lawfully and innocently may. But it is not such a Compliance that will satisfy them. A Man must run with them to the same Excess of Riot, or they will think it strange, and speak evil of him. If he once offers to stop short, and prescribe Bounds to their Mirth; if he pretends to confine them to the Rules of Religion and Reason, they renounce him as a sour and snarling Cynic, that takes an ill-natured Pleasure in crossing the Inclinations of others, and condemning every Thing which they approve: They will not allow that he has any Thing of Humanity, though at the same Time he is endeavouring to persuade them to what is most humane, and most becoming the Dignity of a rational Creature: They oppose him as a Sort of common Adversary, and conclude he must needs hate them, because he hates their Vices. In short, they industriously shun his Conversation, and keep as far off as they can from a Man of such a churlish, reforming Spirit, as maliciously employs his Time in nothing

SERM. else but in endeavouring to mend Man-
 VII. ners, and spoil Company. But sure such
 Men have a wretched Opinion of Society,
 who imagine there can be no such Thing
 but among Rakes and Libertines, and that
 Conversation cannot be agreeable without
 the Relish of a Debauch.

Now whether is the greater Friend to
 Society, he that helps to refine Conversa-
 tion, and make it innocent and useful, or
 he that will converse in no other Manner,
 and but on such Terms, as must necessa-
 rily end in Discord and Confusion ?

LET ungodly Men then rail at the Vir-
 tuous for being singular and fullen ; let
 them ridicule the Heaviness of their Fan-
 cy, their stiff Adherence to Morality, and
 their No-taste of Wit and Humour. In
 the mean Time they have the Satisfaction
 of reflecting, that no Authority or Persua-
 sion could shake their Principles, or en-
 gage them in evil Practices, and are firm-
 ly resolved never to pay so dear for good
 Company, (so called) as to purchase it
 with Ill-manners. And this minds me
 of my

Third General, viz. How a wife and good Man ought to behave himself under such Calumny. I have already anticipated somewhat that might be here offered, in speaking to the particular Instances and Kinds of Aspersion under the last Head. However, there are some more general Directions, that may be given with relation to all Kinds or Degrees of it. As

1st. LET him suffer it with Gentleness and Patience. I do not mean, that a Man ought to be so tame and passive, as to let another rob him of his good Name, and load him with undeserved Reproaches, without endeavouring to vindicate his Character, and make his Innocence appear by just and legal Proofs. This is an unalienable Privilege and Birth-right, of which no Man can be debarred: Nay, he himself cannot fairly recede from it. It is a Piece of necessary Justice he owes himself and the Truth, not to betray his Cause, but to clear his injured Reputation as fully as he can.

BUT by suffering with Patience and Gentleness, I mean, that he should not be so far provoked by any ill Usage, as to

SERM. treat another in the same Manner, and
 VII. return Railing for Railing, or Censure for
 Censure; not to be transported with furious Rage and immoderate Resentment, which does sometimes betray Men into great Inconveniencies, and verifies the Character they are labouring to disprove: In-
 somuch that more Credit may be lost in the unbecoming Defence of a good Cause, than the fullest Conviction of a bad one. Let him be careful then so to do Justice to himself, as not to transgress the Law of Charity towards his Neighbour.

2. IF he cannot silence and suppress such Slanders, let him learn to despise them. It is, I confess, a hard Lesson, and very difficult to be practised, when we exhort an ingenuous Person not to be concerned for his Reputation: A Good Name is the fairest Part of a Man's Inheritance, and whatever touches upon that, affects him in the tenderest Part, And I would be far from endeavouring to deaden that Principle, which is in some Measure the Life of Virtue, and weaken one of the Master-springs of good and laudable Actions,

NOR am I enjoining any one so imprac-
S E R M .
ticable a Task, as to court Disgrace, and VII.
make Ignominy his Choice. There is a
Sense of Honour, which is so far from
being inconsistent with Religion, that it
is a Part of it. But when one's best Acti-
ons are imputed as Crimes, and Men en-
deavour to shame him by that which is
his Glory, that very Sense of Honour will
encline him to despise such Shame, as his
Saviour did when he endured the Cross.
Secure in his own Innocence, and acquit-
ted by his Conscience, which is as good
as a Thousand Witnesses, let him go on
in his Course, and no more regard the
Censure of maligning Tongues, than the
deaf Adder does the Voice of the Charmer,
which will disappoint them at least of one
Part of their Aim, their Intention being
as well to provoke and irritate the Person
abused, as to lessen him in the Opinion
of other Men: Nor is there any Thing
which so effectually balks and baffles the
Rage of a malicious Man, as when he
perceives that his Blows make no Impres-
sion; that all the Fury of an envenomed
Tongue, which he discharges on a good
Man,

SERM. Man, does not so much as stir or move
 VII. him, that he seems not to feel, or be concerned at it, or to think himself aggrieved. Learn therefore to despise Calumny, and it will cease to pursue thee, regard not Malice, and it will fall of Course. But especially

3. HAVE a singular Care not to be so far terrified by the Reproaches of wicked Men, as to grow weary of thy Virtue, and forego thy Innocence and Integrity. Never comply with their pernicious Counsels to avoid the Effects of their Anger and Repentment, nor purchase thy Peace with them at the Expence of the Peace of thy own Breast. Keep firm and steady to thy Principle, and consent not to any Thing that is unlawful; for if once you begin to give Ground, you will soon be taken in their Nets, one unworthy Compliance will be made an Argument to draw on another, and if their Example is not sufficient to engage you in a wicked Action, they will press you with your own, and tell you 'tis no more than you have done already: And the same servile Fear of being exposed to their Ill-will by thy Refusal

Refusal to join with them, which first drew SERM. thee into their Fellowship, will hinder thy VII. Retreat.

LET it then be your principal Care to please God, and if the Approbation of Men follows, (as the Approbation of Good Men will follow) let it: But if on the contrary they should be displeas'd, and hate and revile you for it, consider that it is in a good Cause, and call to Remembrance the Saying of our blessed Saviour, *Blessed are you, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all Manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven. Matt. v. 11, 12.* How poor a Thing! of how little Weight or Consideration is that good or ill Opinion of an ill Man, in Comparifon of an eternal Re-compense! and will any Man for this offend his God, and grieve his Conscience, and renounce his Title to future Glory?

Invidiam placare paras, virtute relicta?
Contemnere miser — was the Saying of an Heathen, and an admirable Good one.
Poor Wretch! dost thou think to appease
Envy,

SERM. Envy, by parting with thy Virtue? the
 VII. Doing so will expose thee to Contempt,
 which is worse than Envy. Strange! that Men should be so much more afraid of being thought wicked than of being so, and industriously deserve an ill Character in order to avoid one.

To sum up this Advice then. Fear not them which wound your Reputation, and after that have no more that they can do; but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell, yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Which leads me to my

Fourth and last Enquiry, viz. What will be the Event hereafter of such an Enmity to God and Goodness as is visible in the Endeavours of wicked Men to blacken and defame the Righteous: They must give an Account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead; which will serve as a brief Application of the whole.

AND surely a very lame and wretched Account will such Men be able to give before the Tribunal of that Judge, of whose Kingdom they have been such profest

feft Enemies: who have not only been SERM.
Traytors themselves, but made it their Bu- VII.
siness to pervert others from their Allegi-
ance, and cause a Revolt in Earth, as the
Devil did in Heaven. Such Men have too
just Reason to expect their Portion with
the Devil and his Angels, who are possessed
of so many diabolical Qualities. One
would think that Drunkenness and Riot,
Lust and Envy, with a dismal Catalogue
of Sins besides, should be enough to sink
one poor Soul deep enough, and load him
with a heavy Charge against the Day of
Judgment, and that sufficient for that Day
should be a Man's own Evil. But when
he involves himself in the Guilt of another
Man's Crimes too, and makes himself not
only accessary, but even a Principal there-
in; when he labours to bring Religion it-
self into Disrepute, by opprobriously treat-
ing its best Professors, and detracting from
their Worth by abominable Forgeries; Me-
lancholy indeed is his State, and most de-
plorable his Prospect. If every idle Word
must be accounted for, what Account will
he render of his Words, which have been
not only unprofitable, but injurious and
reproachful?

SERM. reproachful? What shall be done unto thee

VII. O thou false Tongue? mighty and sharp
 Arrows shall be thy Portion with hot burning
 Coals.

What a dreadful and tremendous Thing will it be to be set at the left Hand among the Reprobates, and hear the Judge pronounce this irreverfible Sentence. *Depart ye cursed of my Father into Everlaſting Fire; for theſe my Brethren were innocent, and you accused them; they were righteous, and you would have perverted them; they were dutiful and loyal, and you would have made them Rebels; they were redeemed from Wrath and made Children of Grace, and you would have made them the Children of Wrath again. And though theſe on my right Hand had Grace ſufficient to overcome the Diſcouragements you laid in their Way, and with a ſtern Virtue to perſevere to the End; yet others there are of your own Number of a weaker Faith, and more unſtable Principle, who fell by your Means, and are now under the ſame Condemnation with you. What can a Man ſay in answer to ſo juſt a Charge? How will he then avoid,*

avoid, and yet how will he endure ever-lasting Burnings? SERM.
VII.

THESE are very sad but necessary Reflections, and might be pursued a great deal farther ; but if what has been already said has been well considered, I hope it will be sufficient. I shall therefore forbear at this Time, concluding (as I began) with the Words of St. Peter. *2 Pet. iii. 17, 18. Ye therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these Things before, (he had been speaking of Christ's coming to Judgment,) beware lest ye also being led away with the Error of the wicked, fall from your own Stedfastness. (Or lest you make others fall from theirs.) But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory both now and for ever.*

Amen.





S E R M O N V I I I .

*A Spittal Sermon at St. Bride's, on
Wednesday in Easter-Week, 1707.*



GAL. vi. 2.

*Bear ye one another's Burdens, and
so fulfil the Law of Christ.*

SERM.
VIII.



T. Paul, toward the Close of the preceding Chapter, had been reckoning up the Fruits of the Spirit, and shewing what inward Disposition of Soul, and Regularity of outward Practice, the enlivening Grace of God would produce in those happy Christians, who had subjected the Flesh to the Spirit, had *crucified the former,*

mer, with its Affections and Lusts, and were wholly acted by a divine and heavenly Principle; That such Persons are exempted, not only from the Obligation of the Ceremonial, (from which Christ has set us all free) but from the Sting and Penalty of the Moral Law. For as it is elsewhere affirmed, that *where there is no Law there is no Transgression*, Rom. iv. 15. so it may be said, by way of Reverse, that where there is no Transgression, there is, in effect, no Law. *Against such*, says the Apostle, *there is no Law*, Gal. v. 23. *i. e.* there is none which condemns and disallows their Practices, none which they need be afraid of, who keep the Commandments, since it was only made for the *lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly, and for Sinners, for the unholy and profane, &c.* 1 Tim. i. 9. but not for the righteous Man, who is led by the Spirit of God, and brings forth the Fruits of it.

Now, as the greater Part of those blessed Fruits of that holy Spirit, which the Apostle enumerates, are such as relate to Love and Charity, and a Tenderness of Proceeding, with regard to our Christian Brethren; so, in the Beginning of this

SERM. Chapter, he sets himself, with a more
 VIII. peculiar Earnestness, to urge and excite
 Men to the Practice of this Duty ; exhorting all those who would make any Pretence to the Character of *spiritual* Men, *i. e.* of such as lived, and walked in the Spirit, and were acted by it, to pity and forgive the Frailties of their offending Brethren ; and, if any one among them was *overtaken with a Fault*, to *restore* such a one *in the Spirit of Meekness*, considering it might be their own Case, and that they also were subject to the like Temptations : And then subjoins, in the Words of the Text, *Bear ye one another's Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.*

FROM which Words, as they stand so connected, it may seem, that those *Burdens* of other Men, we are required to *bear*, are no other than their Sins and Provocations : that we should not insult over, and glory in their Miscarriages, nor magnify ourselves above them, by invidious Comparisons ; that we should not treat them as Enemies, but admonish them as Friends, endeavouring to mitigate and heal
 the

the Sore, rather than to exasperate, and make it wider.


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BUT though this be the Thing principally intended, yet we may very well conclude, that this Precept of the Apostle is more extensive, and comprehends the whole Duty of Charity, in all its several Offices and Relations.

IF it were not so, he would not have stiled this Instance of our Obedience a *fulfilling the Law of Christ*: Which we are sure, from the whole Tenor of the Gospel, cannot be entirely fulfilled by a Passive Charity only.

IT is then only we fulfil that *Royal Law*, which requires us to *love our Neighbours as ourselves*, when we are ready to give, as well as to forgive; to relieve the Wants, as well as to pass by or cover the Failings of our Christian Brother; to afford him all that Comfort and Support in his Necessity, which we ourselves could reasonably wish or desire under the same Circumstances; and, in a Word, to help and assist him, to the utmost of our Ability, and bear a Part of the Burden he labours under, of whatever Sort it be.

SERM. I shall therefore proceed to represent to
 VIII. you,



First, What those Burdens are, which, as Men, we are all subject to, and wherein, as Fellow-christians, we are all obliged to be helpful to one another : And,

Secondly, How by so doing, we may be said to *fulfil the Law of Christ*.

First then, For those Burdens of other Men, which require and call for our Assistance ; the chief and heaviest of which are their Sins and Transgressions. This is indeed the most severe and afflicting Load that a poor Soul can groan under ; and good Reason had *David* to complain, when racked with the conscious Remembrance of his Guilt, that his *Iniquities were, like a sore Burden, too heavy for him to bear*. Our Sins are the worst Misfortunes that can befall us ; nor is there any one so deep plunged in Misery, no one is so very a Wretch, or so truly an Object of Compassion, as an insensible and obdurate Sinner.

Sinner. And the rescuing such a one from SERM.
 that *Load of Iniquity and Gall of Bitter-* VIII.
ness, is the friendliest, the noblest, the most
 beneficial Instance of christian Charity.

BUT how can a Man (in this Sense) be
 said to bear the Burden of another? Can
 one Man expiate and atone for another's
 Crimes? Can he *redeem his Brother's Soul,*
or make an Agreement with God for him?
 Can he, by charging himself with any
 Proportion of Guilt, render him less cri-
 minal, and take off from the insupportable
 Weight of his Iniquity?

No, This is an Office beyond the
 Reach of the most extensive Charity, and
 not to be undertook by any meer Man;
 who, be he never so upright, will have
 Faults enough of his own to answer for,
 and be far from needing any addition-
 al Blame, to heighten and inflame his
 Charge.

THE Obligation of Religion is personal,
 and not to be transferred from one to ano-
 ther; nor can there be any such Thing as
 a Communication either of Merit or De-
 merit between the Members of Christ's
 Church; we ~~must~~ all stand or fall by our

SERM. OWN ACTIONS, and, as it follows a Verse
 VIII. or two after my Text, *Every Man*, in this
 Respect, *shall bear his own Burden.*

BUT, though we cannot bear the Offences, we may bear with the Offenders, We may pass by, with a christian Candor and Forbearance, their petty and pardonable Transgressions ; or, be they never so flagrant and enormous, never so heinously aggravated, we may yet endeavour to restore them in the Spirit of Meekness, and make them sensible of the Folly and Danger of their Sins : We may use such Methods for their Information, as may possess them with a true Sense of their Duty, which they never knew before, or had never well considered : And by Exhortations, by Counsels, by Entreaties, or, when they are irreclaimable by any gentler Ways, by Punishment and Coercion, so far as we have Authority to inflict it, we may (with the Blessing of God on our Endeavours) reduce them from their wild Extravagance to serious and sober Thinking, put a Stop to the Growth of their Impiety, and by converting them from the Er-
 FOR

ror of their Ways, save their Souls from Death, and cover a Multitude of Sins. SERM. VIII.

THIS Charity to the Souls of Men, and labouring with an affectionate Concern to save them from eternal Ruin, has most of the Spirit of Christianity in it, and makes us, of all others, most nearly resemble the Pattern of our gracious Redeemer, whose whole Time here on Earth was spent in performing Offices of this Nature.

NAY indeed, the poor and indigent Condition in which he chose to appear in this World, left him no Room to be liberal in any other Way, unless when he was pleased to work a Miracle, to enable him to be so.

AND the same charitable Work may be performed by us, as it was by him, with no other Expence, than the Exercise of some Patience, and the Loss of a little Time, which can never be so usefully spent, never so profitably lost.

BUT even with respect to Giving and Receiving, we may be certainly assured, that whatever we bestow by way of Alms, will be so much the more acceptable, the

SERM. more there is of this Principle in us, that
 VIII. we design to honour God with our Sub-
 stance; who is never so truly honoured by
 it, as when it is employed in such a Man-
 ner, and to such Uses, as may most effec-
 tually promote the spiritual and eternal
 Welfare of his Creatures.

I may be occasionally led, in the Sequel
 of my Discourse, to say more on this Sub-
 ject: But for the present I shall dismiss it,
 without particularly applying what has
 been said; only in the general, I hope and
 believe, that most, or all of those chari-
 table Foundations, which, by the Provi-
 dence of God, and the Piety of good
 Christians, have been erected in this City,
 which so happily flourish under your Care
 and Inspection, and which you are now
 met to countenance and encourage, do, in
 a large Degree, (besides the temporal and
 political Good they tend to) contribute to
 that great and desirable End, the making
 Men wiser and better, and consequently
 happier. That in those Places a great deal
 of growing Vice and Immorality is timely
 suppressed and kept under, and that incor-
 rigible Dissoluteness of Manners, which no
 Coun-

in Easter-Week, 1707.

Counfel or Inſtruction can reform, is how-
ever with-held from the Means of Sinning,
though the Inclination ſtill remains, and
the World is freed (for a Time at leaſt)
from the Contagion of ſuch foul Examples.

I now proceed to repreſent to you, the
innocent Burdens that Mankind is liable to
bear ; thoſe Calamities and Diſaſters which
are the inſeparable Attendants on frail Hu-
manity ; ſuch as the Courſe of Providence
will oblige every Man, though never ſo
unwilling, to bear ſome Share of ; and the
Laws of Chriſtianity ſhould incline him
farther to take more than his own, and
with a willing Generoſity to ſubmit to
ſome Inconveniencies, which were not im-
mediately and neceſſarily allotted him ;
wherein ſoever he perceives that he him-
ſelf is remarkably favoured, and his Neigh-
bour heavily over-charged.

THERE is indeed ſuch a numerous
Train of Ills, and great Variety of Mis-
fortunes, that beſet us in this mortal State,
there are ſo many Torments and Anxieties,
ſuch ſevere and trying Croſſes and Perplex-
ities, which proceed from different Cauſes,
and affect us in different Parts, whiſt yet
every

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SERM. every Man's own Calamity, so long as he

VIII. continues to smart under it, appears to him the most intolerable of all others ; that it would be an endless, as well as an ungrateful Task, to open all the Scenes of Misery, and set forth every particular Grievance, which the Sons and Daughters of Affliction complain of.

BUT, setting aside private and personal Cases, the Evils that are incident to human Nature, may be, as they commonly are, reduced to three Heads ; and I shall accordingly consider them, as they affect our outward State and Condition, our Body, or our Mind. And first, for those Evils which concern our outward State and Condition.

WE all feel ourselves to be cloathed with frail and perishable Bodies, whose continual Waste and Decay of Spirits requires as constant Refreshments and Supplies ; and we as sensibly perceive, that even Food and Raiment, and so much as absolutely is necessary for our Support and Preservation, we receive not as the Gift of Nature. We come into the World naked and destitute, and abandoned to the Care of others,
before

before we are capable of taking any for our-
selves. And when we are capable, we
find ourselves obliged to eat our Bread in
the Sweat of our Brows, and to provide
for our Subsistence by our own Labour
and Industry, unless another's Industry has
before-hand made Provision for us, which
it is not every one's Fortune to be born to.

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VIII.
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WE see the great Dispenser of Blessings  
has thought fit to ordain it otherwise, and  
to distribute these worldly Comforts by  
very unequal Lots ; not but that he re-  
gards both Rich and Poor with the Eye of  
a common Parent, and resolves to make  
good, in due Time, that seeming Inequa-  
lity. In the mean Time, he gives them  
both an Opportunity of serving him, and  
conspiring, in their respective Circum-  
stances and Capacities, to glorify his Name,  
the only true End of living here below ;  
the one by a patient Submission under his  
Want and Penury, the other by a pious  
and charitable Use of his Abundance.

IT is for this End that God has made  
one Man to differ from another ; for this  
he has appointed some to stand in Need of  
Relief, and qualified others to afford it ;  
that

SERM. that each might exert the Virtues proper  
 VIII. to the Sphere, wherein, by the Divine  
 Appointment, he is placed. Whereas, if every one were made sufficient of himself, if no Man had Occasion for the Assistance of any other, did he contain within himself such an abundant Plenitude, such an unexhausted Spring of all worldly Comforts, as he was secure would never fail him, nor oblige him to seek for any Thing without himself; the brightest and most exalted Graces that now adorn our Minds, would then be wholly useles; the best and most convincing Demonstration we can give of our Love to Christ, (which we can never so livelily and acceptably demonstrate, as by extending our charitable Aid to the distressed Members of his Body) would then be of no Service to us, would be no Proof or Evidence of our Sincerity at all, whilst our Charity remained untried, whilst it lay dormant and buried in the Habit, thro' the Defect of suitable Objects on whom it might be actually exercised.

So that in Reality, a rich Man, if he considers to what End his Riches were given him, and is so disposed in his Heart,

as

as he ought to be, may as properly be said to need a poor Man to give to, as a poor one may to need the Assistance and friendly Contribution of the Rich. Nay, if Things were impartially and truly weighed, it would appear that his Acceptance of what is offered him, is, in its Effects and Consequences, by far the greater and more beneficial Charity of the two.

THERE is then, and it is very fit there should be, a remarkable Disproportion in the outward Allotments that befall us, to the Intent that God, who divideth to every Man severally as he will, may put us to an open Trial; that, on the one Hand, his Goodness may shine forth, and his Mercy triumph, in rewarding the Beneficence and pious Liberality of those who abound in Wealth, as well as the chearful Contentedness and Submission to his Pleasure, in such as suffer Need; or else, on the other Hand, his Justice may be magnified in the exemplary Punishment of those, who are miserably griping and hard-hearted in one Estate, or impatiently restless and querulous in the other.

SERM. THE Beauty therefore of Providence is  
 VIII. so far from being eclipsed, the divine  
 Wisdom so little liable to Exception in this  
 particular, that all Men are not equally  
 rich and powerful; that, on the contrary,  
 without such Inequality, there would be  
 no Harmony at all in the Course of Things:  
 And we may discern the visible Marks of  
 God's infinite, unerring Prudence, in ma-  
 king us subservient to one another, as well  
 as to himself.

FOR as we should be strongly tempted  
 to withdraw our Allegiance from him, if  
 he had made us independent on himself;  
 as we should probably cease to worship  
 and invoke him, if we had nothing farther  
 to expect from him, if he had given us  
 our Portion at once, and made it securely  
 and irrevocably our own; so, had he  
 made us independent of one another, the  
 mutual Offices of Love and Friendship,  
 in the Performance whereof consists the  
 Excellence and Dignity of our Nature,  
 would be quite extinguished. In such a  
 State of Things, there could be no Givers,  
 because there would be no Receivers; the  
 merciful Man could have no Opportunity  
 of

of exerting his Bounty, and testifying his SERM.  
good Will to his Neighbour, when he, to VIII.  
whomsoever he would extend it, would  
be as amply provided as himself.

AND let any one consider what a comfortless State this Life must be, if Love and Mercy, Gratitude and Friendship, the sweetest of human Acts, and which affect us with the truest and most sensible Pleasure, should be entirely banished.

BUT this (as I have observed) is far from being the Case with us. As the World now stands, there is a large Scope for doing Good, and Objects of Commiseration more than enough to exhaust the largest Charity.

BUT sure they would be less numerous, and the Wealth of those who have this World's Good, beyond what will supply their reasonable Occasions, would be dispersed in a much more suitable Proportion to the Wants of the Indigent and Necessitous, if Men were truly and heartily convinced of the present Joy and Satisfaction that springs within the Soul of a merciful Man, when he has comforted and refreshed a miserable Object, as well as the glorious  
Reward

SERM. Reward with which his Charity will infal-  
 VIII. libly be crowned hereafter.



OH! could the obdurate Miser, whose Heart and Soul are sunk into the Earth, and buried with his Money, who is obstinately deaf to all the Cries and Entreaties of the Distressed, who can behold a poor famishing Wretch with unrelenting Bowels; could he, I say, perceive but one Glympse of those bright and never fading Riches, which the charitable Person has treasured up in Heaven; how would he despise that fordid Dross, in which he now places the Sum of his Felicity! how earnestly would he contend for the true Riches, and provide him *Bags that wax not old!* what *Friends* would he make him with the *Mammon of Unrighteousness* here, that he might *be received into an eternal Habitation*, when this World, and all the Glory of it, shall pass away! how much more solid Complacency would he find, in succouring the Poor, and redeeming him from Misery and Ruin, than ever he did before in thriving by his Necessity, in grinding his Face, in oppressing and devouring him!



WE are under a great Mistake (and that Mistake is indeed the Source and Fountain of all our Uncharitableness) if we imagine that we are so far Masters of any Thing we possess, as to have no Account to render of it. From this false Notion of Property, we are too apt to look upon ourselves as discharged from all Obligations to do good, any farther than we are prompted to it by our natural Propensity or Inclination; and are ready to cry, with *Nabal*, Shall I take *my* Bread, and *my* Flesh, and give it — ?

BUT whatever the Dictates of Self-Love may suggest to us, the Gospel teaches us a very different Lesson, where we are assured, that these worldly Advantages are Talents committed to our Trust by the Sovereign Lord of the Universe; that we are but the Stewards and Dispensers of it under him, who will one Day make a very strict Enquiry, how and to what Purposes we employed them. And our Saviour has warned us to prepare to answer at the great Day, on these Heads of Examination, What Hungry we fed, what Naked we clothed, what other Objects of Compassion we relieved,

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SERM. *i. e.* so far as our Means and Abilities extended, after Allowance made for our own tolerable Support according to our Station. For, so far as this, there is something of Reason in what is commonly alledged of Charity's beginning with one's self; that a Man's own lawful and necessary Occasions are, in the first Place, to be considered. But Men must not suffer it to begin and end there too; nor must they judge every Thing necessary, and consequently appropriate it solely to themselves, which Avarice or Pride, which Luxury or Wantonness require.

HE that will postpone the doing any friendly Offices, till those unreasonable Humours are satisfied, will never begin to do Good; for those will never have done craving.

To straiten and pinch ourselves, only to give to one, who, we are sure, needs it less, is indeed such an Excess of Bounty, as is in no wise required of us. But when this is made a feigned Pretence, only to cover our own Uncharitableness; when we make very great Allowances for our own imaginary Wants, and very little for the

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the real ones of others; it is too plain a SERM.  
 Sign, that we are not touched with that VIII.  
 compassionate Feeling of the Straits and  
 Sufferings of our Christian Brother, which  
 our common Nature, and common Reli-  
 gion, ought to excite in us.

BUT here some Person of real Tender-  
 ness and Compassion, whose hearty Desire  
 it is to be as beneficial as he can, may  
 thus interpose.

*SINCE my Power of doing Good is not  
 so extensive as my Will to do it, since my  
 Faculties are narrow and confined, nor can  
 my Assistance possibly reach to all that need  
 it; since, when I have done my utmost, I  
 must still be mortified with the afflicting  
 Thought, that there are many unhappy  
 Wretches yet left, for whose Ills I am able  
 to provide no Remedy; but whilst, with the  
 good Samaritan, I am binding up the Wounds  
 of one unfortunate Man, it may possibly so  
 happen, that another may fall among Thieves,  
 or into some other Disaster, and have Occa-  
 sion for that Relief, which I am unable to  
 afford him, unless I withdraw it from the  
 other. This then being the Posture of  
 Things, amidst this Variety of compassionate*

SERM. *Cases, how shall I be directed and deter-*  
 VIII. *mined? Where shall I cast my Mite, or how*  
*shall I be assured of employing it to the best*  
*Advantage?*


*BY what Rule shall I guide myself in the Distribution of my Alms? Shall I act in this Matter at random and by chance, giving to all without Distinction, till the Sum I had set apart is quite exhausted? Or shall I take my Measures from the Merits of the Object?*

FOR Satisfaction in which Case, let it be noted,

THAT although Charity, in Proportion to one's Substance, is a necessary Duty; yet, as to any determinate Sum, the Time when, the Manner how, or the Persons to whom it shall be dispensed, these are Matters of Choice, and left to every one's Discretion.

EVERY one therefore may extend his Charity to such Objects as most affect him. But it is to be hoped, that, for his own Sake at least, he will take care to be beneficial in some way or other, and that he will not make his Uncertainty where to bestow his Alms, an Excuse for bestowing

none

none at all. Do all the Good thou can'st S E R M.  
for thy own Part, and trust Providence for VIII.  
the rest which thou can'st not do. 

IT may likewise be reasonably expected, that every prudent Man will choose such Objects of his Bounty, where it is least in Danger of being misapplied, and where he has a tolerable Ground of Assurance, that it will conduce to some happy End. Though if it should happen otherwise, this would reflect no Dishonour on him who gave it with an honest Intent; nor would it be any Lessening of his Charity.

GOOD Will and Benevolence, Pity and Compassion, are a Debt we owe to all Mankind. All that partake of the same Nature with us, may lay Claim to these common Offices, though still a more peculiar Regard is to be had of those to whom we have nearer Engagements, and to whom we are united by closer Ties. But especially we should endeavour so to employ our Charity, as to make it most serviceable to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind.

SERM. AND this very naturally prompts me to  
 VIII. recommend a particular Case of Charity,  
 which confessedly falls within these Rules,  
 and is free from the Suspicion of any finis-  
 ter Practice in the Management: And  
 that is, providing for the Education of  
 poor Children (and especially of those who  
 now attend this Solemnity) in the Fear of  
 God and the Principles of Religion, and  
 such a competent Degree of Learning, as  
 may enable them to get an honest Livi-  
 hood, and render them useful and service-  
 able to their Country.

GREAT Numbers of Souls have by this  
 Means been preserved from apparent Ruin,  
 and many who would have been a Dis-  
 grace and Burden, have since become Or-  
 naments to the Nation.

WE have great Reason to bless the di-  
 vine Goodness, and to remember with Ho-  
 nour those pious Benefactors, who have  
 hitherto promoted so useful a Charity, for  
 the happy Effects it has already produced.  
 And we might hope for much greater Ad-  
 vantages still, were the Revenue more an-  
 swerable to the Greatness of the Charge,  
 and the Worthiness of the Design; which  
 whether

whether it is or no, you will judge from the following Report.

SERM.  
VIII.  
}

*Here was read the true Report of the State of Christ's-Hospital.*

BEFORE I leave the Head I am upon, touching the Misfortunes that relate to our outward Condition, (on which I have enlarged the more, because it is the most general, and leaves me the less to say on the Cases which are yet behind, which for the most part admit of the same Relief) give me leave to lay before you two other Representations from the Hospital of *Bridewell*, and the *Workhouse*.

*A true Report of the State of Bridewell and London Workhouse.*

THESE are very fit and necessary Receptacles for such profligate and abandoned Wretches, as are lost to all Shame and Modesty, and past all Reproof, but that of the Scourge; as well as for those idle and unprofitable Vagrants, who are the Pest of your Doors, and Nuisance of your Streets, who, if you do not force them

SERM. VIII. to maintain themselves by an unwilling Labour, will force you to maintain them without it, by an unwilling and extorted Charity.

BUT, *Secondly*, I come now to consider the Burdens we are obliged to bear for one another, which more immediately affect our Body. This earthly and mortal Part of us is made, as you all know and feel, of a very weak and frail Contexture, subject to be disordered by a thousand Accidents, to be racked and tortured by acute and violent Diseases, to waste with pining Sicknes, and linger away an uneasy Life under an infirm and crazy Constitution. Every Part of us is exposed to Wounds, or some other Casualty, which may not only give us great Pain and Uneasiness for the present, but prove an Inlet, and open a Door to Death itself.

BUT here again it may be asked, as before, in the Case of Sins and Trespasses, What is it that one Man can do for another in such Circumstances? Can I be sick and languish for my Neighbour, or will it be any Advantage to him if I am? Will my Sicknes add to his Health, or my Weak-




Weakness to his Strength? Can I mitigate SERM.  
 his Pain, and ease him of his Smart, by VIII.  
 taking it on myself, and suffering in his  
 Stead?

No; our Experience tells us that this too is as impracticable as the other. A Man can no more consign over to another the Infirmities of his Body, than he can those of his Soul. Not all the Riches and Power of the greatest Monarch can purchase for him this Priviledge of transferring to any one besides, that bodily Pain and Weakness which is allotted for his own Share, and which he himself is bound to sustain in his proper Person.

THE Scripture tells us of a great and good King, who wished in vain that he could have died for another; and as vain would his Wish have been, had he desired that any other might die, or be sick, or undergo any other Misery, in his Place. For in this Sense too *every Man must bear his own Burden.*

BUT however, blessed be the Divine Goodness! We are not left so destitute, as not to be able to administer some Comfort to our afflicted Brother, when he languishes


SERM. VIII.  guishes on a sick Bed, or groans with the heavy Anguish of a maimed Limb or mangled Body. We may pity him at least, and even Pity is some Relief to the Miserable.

BUT this is not all. For as the disastrous Accidents that may befall our Bodies are very numerous, so are the Remedies too, by which those Accidents may be repaired. There are salutary and healing Medicines, which with the Physician's Skill in applying, the Blessing of God cooperating, do often restore such lamentable Objects from a very hopeless, and almost desperate Condition.

THESE Remedies, this Help of the Physician's Art, the Great and Rich can procure for themselves, whenever it is their Lot to be visited with such Calamities, from which indeed they are no more exempted than the Poorest.

BUT when Poverty and Sickness meet together, what must become of such unhappy Wretches, if it were not for the Relief of charitable Christians, who by providing for them that Help, which they could not afford themselves, and defraying

ing

ing the Charge and Expences of their SERM.  
 Cure, may, in a very good and commend- VIII.  
 able Senſe, be ſaid *to bear the Burdens of*   
*other Men?*

AND to ſhew you what a fair Opportunity may at any Time be had, of exerciſing your Charity in this way, let me now lay before you the State of the two Hospitals that are peculiarly appropriated to the Relief of ſuch Objects of Compaſſion.

*Here was read the true Report of St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals.*

YOU ſee then how much Good has been done in this Kind, and how much more is ſtill wanting. There is no one but muſt be convinced that this is a very uſeful and neceſſary Piece of Charity: Which, beſides the Advantage it brings to the poor Sufferers, in healing their Wounds, many of which were received in the Defence of their Country, which gives them the juſter Title to your Aſſiſtance; beſides this, I ſay, it is a publick Benefit, that every one partakes of, to  
 have

SERM. have such rueful and unsightly Spectacles  
 VIII. removed from common View. Were there  
 no such Places of Reception for the Maimed and Wounded, every Street would be an Hospital, and there must lie a *Lazarus* full of Sores at every rich Man's Door.

BUT *Thirdly*, We are not only liable to be thus heavily aggrieved, as has been shewn, in our outward Circumstances, and our bodily State, but our Mind also has its Grievances which want to be redressed. The greatest and worst of which is, the Reflexion of a guilty Conscience, for which there is no other Cure can be prescribed, but removing the Cause, and putting away our Guilt by a solemn and sincere Repentance, to which we should always be exhorting and admonishing one another.

ANOTHER great Evil relating to the Mind, which is the too common Parent of Vice and Immorality, of Debauchery and Profaneness, (though some have stiled it the Mother of Devotion) is gross Ignorance, and spiritual Blindness.

IT is a sad and deplorable Thing to see the Mind of Man, which is of heavenly  
 Original

Original and Extraction, and is capable of receiving such noble Impressions, lie wholly barren and unimproved, over-grown with a fordid Rust, and clouded with impenetrable Darknefs. SERM.  
VIII.

SUCH a wretched Debasement of human Nature every good Christian should take to heart, and endeavour, to the utmost of his Power, to prevent or rectify in others. But this falls in with what I have spoken on another Head, though it obliges me again to remind you of that Charity that is applied to the Education of Youth.

I shall mention but one Calamity more, which our better Part is subject to, and that is a very moving one, *viz.* Madness and Distraction.

How does it shock the Soul of a considerate Person, to see the Image of his Maker thus defaced? To see that boasted and celebrated Reason, that distinguishes Man from the inferior Part of the Creation, thus lost and intercepted, thus lamentably confus'd and disturbed in its Operations? To see the same Person now arguing rationally and calmly, and on a sudden, without any visible Cause for such an Alteration,

SERM. teration, become wild and staring, fierce  
 VIII. and unmanageable, or fantastically vain,  
 forgetful of himself and of his Friends, and  
 all that he seemed to know before, either  
 hurting others by a mischievous, or expo-  
 sing himself by a ridiculous Behaviour.  
 These Persons sure are fit Objects of Com-  
 passion, which I shall need no other Mo-  
 tive to excite you to, than to read to you,

*The Report of Bethlehem Hospital.*

You see there is a large Field for you to be charitable and beneficent, and I trust in God you will all be so, in as ample Measure as your respective Circumstances will admit, and in such Manner as you think most proper.

I should now proceed to that which I proposed as my second General Head; but (having already exceeded) I shall now only urge it as a short Enforcement of what has been already said. And it is this: That by being thus charitable, and bearing one another's Burdens, we are said to *fulfil the Law of Christ.*

LOVE

LOVE is indeed the fulfilling of the Law SERM. and the Gospel too. It is the *Bond of Per-* VIII.  
*fectness*, and the Consummation of all that  
 is good in us.

HE that has this Principle fixed and rooted in him, will not fail (so long as he is under the immediate and actual Influence of it) in any Point of Duty toward his Neighbour ; he will not only refrain from any Invasion of his just Right, but be forward to lend him his Assistance, and to do him all friendly Offices ; because all such Abstinence from ill, and Readiness to do good, with the several Acts thence arising, are but subordinate Branches of that general and comprehensive Rule of *Loving our Neighbours as ourselves*. Love is the distinguishing Mark of Christianity, and that Badge by which our Lord would have his Disciples known. *Hereby*, says he, *shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another*. To say we are Followers of the *Holy Jesus*, and yet retain no Bowels of Compassion for our Brethren, is the greatest Absurdity that Words can express ; nor are there any Terms of Opposition so contradictory, so  
 abso-

SERM. absolutely incompatible, as *Uncharitable*  
 VIII. *Christian.* Love is the noblest Ornament  
 of our Souls ; it outshines the other Graces that reside there, as the Apostle has assured us : It makes us most like God, and the blessed Author of our Religion. If we have not this, whatever other Excellencies we abound in, we are Nothing, of no Value or Consideration at all ; we are but as *sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal.*

THE liveliest Faith, the most vigorous Hope, the most ardent and inflamed Devotion, will stand us in no Stead, if they are not sanctified and perfected by that enlivening and vital Principle, in which the Life and Spirit of our Religion consists. For though Charity itself may cover a Multitude of Sins, yet no Excess of any other Virtue will cover the Defect of that. Whoever thou art therefore, who valuest thy self upon the highest Proficiency in such a Scheme of Godliness, as has hitherto been exclusive of Charity, though thy other Attainments may be very great, *yet lackest thou one Thing. Go thy Way, sell what thou hast, and give to the Poor,*  
*and*



*in Easter-Week, 1707.*

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*and so shalt thou have Treasure in Heaven.* SERM.

WHICH that we may all lay up, while we are here, and have the Fruition of it hereafter, God of his infinite Mercy grant.

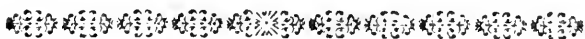
*To whom, &c.*





## S E R M O N IX.

A Spittal Sermon at *St. Bride's*, on  
*Wednesday in Easter-Week, April*  
16, 1718.



JOB XXIX. 15, 16.

*I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet  
was I to the Lame. I was a  
Father to the Poor.*

SERM.  
IX.



WE have here an illustrious Pat-  
tern of Charity and Beneficence  
in the Person of righteous *Job*,  
who, though at the Time of  
his uttering these Words he was reduced  
to the most abject and helpless State of  
Misery; yet had once been acquainted  
with

*in* Easter-Week, April 16, 1718. 273

with happier Days, had known what it SERM.  
was to live in Affluence and Plenty, in IX.  
State and Dignity, invested with a very  
eminent, if not sovereign Authority: For  
so it should seem from some of the fore-  
going Verses, where he speaks of the  
*Princes refraining from talking, and the*  
*Nobles holding their Peace* before him.  
(*Ver. 9, 10.*) As also from the Words im-  
mediately preceding the Text, where he  
says, *My Judgment was as a Robe and as*  
*a Diadem.*

BUT in the Midst of his Extremity and  
Distress, he has the Comfort of reflecting,  
that in the more fortunate and flourishing  
Part of his Life, even then when he had  
every Thing at Command, and was free  
from all Apprehension of the unexpected  
Change of Fortune that afterwards befel  
him; he was far from abusing the Gifts  
of his great Creator: That he had neither  
made his Abundance subservient to Riot  
and Excess, nor his Power to Injustice and  
Oppression; but on the contrary, that  
when at the utmost Pitch of human Gran-  
deur, he still remembered he was a Man,  
and condescended to the common Offices

SERM. of Humanity : He looked down from the  
 IX. Heighth of all his Prosperity, with a melting  
 Eye and compassionate Heart, on those who were broken with Misfortunes, and overwhelmed with Sorrow : He exerted his Strength and interposed his Might, not with an over-bearing Sway, to crush the Weak and Innocent, but to protect them from the Insults, and rescue them from the Violence of injurious Oppressors.

IN short, it appears by the several Acts of Beneficence enumerated in this and other Chapters of the History, by the frequent Appeals he makes to God, as to the Sincerity of his Professions, and by the Testimony God himself is pleased to bear to his Integrity, That he was not only strictly upright in his Dealings, a Man of Justice and Probity, that scorned to invade the Property of any other ; but that he was a common Friend and Benefactor, a Lover of Mankind, one that chearfully employed his Time, his Labour, and his Substance, in promoting the Welfare and Happiness of others.

WHICH truly great and amiable Character I shall make it my present Endeavour

vour to recommend to your Imitation, by SERM.  
a Display of such Instances of *Job's* Benevo- IX.  
lence as are contained in those Words I  
have chosen to discourse on, applying them  
still as I go along to such Branches of Pub-  
lick Charity committed to your Inspection,  
as bear the nearest Resemblance to those  
respective Acts, and that according to the  
Order in which they offer themselves in  
my Text.

*First* then, Let us consider that Profes-  
sion of *Job*, that he was *Eyes to the Blind*.  
This is commonly understood of intellec-  
tual Blindness, of those whose Minds are  
darkned; and the being *Eyes to them* must  
consequently mean the enlightning those  
dark Minds by the Beams of Knowledge  
and Instruction. But there is no Reason  
why this figurative Sense of the Words  
should exclude the literal one: As well  
those who are deprived of the Organs of  
their bodily Sight, as those whose Under-  
standings are darkened, either through na-  
tural Impediments, or through the Defect  
of proper Means for their Improvement,  
are undoubtedly real Objects of Compas-  
sion;

SERM. fion; nor can it be questioned but the  
 IX. diffusive Bounty of charitable *Job* extend-  
 ed itself to the Sufferers of either Sort, in  
 such suitable Methods of Relief, as were  
 adapted to their respective Cases.

THE Loss of *Eye-sight* is so touching a  
 Calamity, so irksome and comfortless a  
 State, as to raise Compassion in some Breasts  
 not apt to be much affected by other Ob-  
 jects. When such a Disaster attends even  
 the most Prosperous and Wealthy, it is a  
 very sore Affliction, nor can the largest  
 Exuberance of other worldly Blessings  
 compensate for the Want of that common  
 Blessing, Light. No Variety whatever of  
 Meats to the Taste, or Sounds to the Ear,  
 can afford an equal Entertainment to that  
 beautiful Variety of Objects which adorns  
 the visible Creation. The *Sun* may come  
 forth as a *Bridegroom* from his Cham-  
 ber, and rejoice as a *Giant* to run his  
 Course; but the blind Man has not the  
 Joy of beholding it. The Face of the  
 Earth may be to others a Land of *Goshen*,  
 but he lives in the midst of *Egyptian*  
 Darkness. The Morning Dawn, or Me-  
 ridian Brightness, are by him undistin-  
 guishable

guishable from the Gloominess of Night: SERM.  
He knows no Difference between them, IX.  
but from the Information of others, unless  
perhaps he form an uncertain Guess, from  
the different Degrees of Noise, or the  
Depth of Silence. If ever there was a  
Time in Life, when his Organs were un-  
impaired, he may have an Idea indeed of  
Light and Colours from past Remem-  
brance, and that may be some Entertain-  
ment to the Mind, may help his Concep-  
tions, and quicken his Apprehension of  
Matters related to him. But if he brought  
that Defect into the World with him,  
and never had the Gift of Sight; the very  
Notion of what Light is, can no more en-  
ter into his Mind, than that it self can  
enter into his Eyes. Whatever he is able  
to conceive of it from the liveliest De-  
scription, is almost as wide from the real  
Nature of it, as confused, as inadequate,  
as our Speculations about heavenly Things,  
when we endeavour in this unglorified  
State to comprehend them fully, for which  
we are not as yet provided with suitable  
Faculties.

SERM. STUDIOUS and contemplative Men, when bereft of Sight, may find some Relief and Amusement under their Disability, from that Closeness of Thought and Undistractedness of Attention, in which they surpass other Men, whose Train of Meditation is often interrupted, and the Mind led astray by the wandering of the Eye.

THE Rich and Opulent, though to him also (as I before observed) it cannot be otherwise than a sore Affliction to be so disabled, yet has the Means in his Hands of making his State not inconsolable: He wants for no Conversation or Intelligence: He has those at Command, who in more Senses than one, are ready to be *Eyes to him*, either by reading to him at Home, or directing his Steps if he walks Abroad.

BUT alas, how shiftless and solitary is the Case of him, whose Blindness is accompanied with extreme Want, who is not attended by any friendly Comforter, who is reduced to the miserable Choice whether he will starve at Home, or beg Abroad, at the Hazard of his other Limbs, whilst, for want of human Assistance, he commits himself to the Guidance of a Brute Animal,



Animal, and borrows *those* Eyes to supply his own Defect. SERM.  
IX.

I AM sorry this first Case I have been considering, should be so little pertinent as it is to the Occasion of your present Meeting. But since, I think, there is no peculiar Provision made, in any one of your Hospitals, for this *Species* of *Invalids*, I must be content for the present to leave it unapplied, but not without an Intention of briefly resuming it, before I finish my Discourse.

I PROCEED now to consider the same Clause of my Text: *I was Eyes to the Blind*, in the metaphorical Sense in which it is usually explained.

Now the rational Powers of a Man, which is the inward Eye-sight, may be blinded by *Sin*, by *Ignorance*, or by *Distraction*: And he who is instrumental in dispelling those Mists which cloud the Understanding, from which soever of these Causes they arise, may be said in a very laudable Sense to be *Eyes to the Blind*.

THE *Sinner* indeed may, and often does, believe himself possessed of an uncommon Degree of Understanding: So  
does

SERM. does the mad Man too, and is so much  
 IX. the madder for believing so. He thinks  
 he sees farther than other Men, and pities  
 the deluded Wretches who suffer them-  
 selves to be tied up to Rules, and laid un-  
 der the unnecessary Restraints of Religion  
 and Conscience : Whilst himself all the  
 Time is under the greatest Delusion : His  
 vicious Habits and depraved Appetites be-  
 get unaccountable Errors in his Judgment,  
 and stifle the Suggestions of sober Reason.  
 St. Peter in his Second Epistle, ch. 1. ha-  
 ving recommended some moral Virtues,  
 adds a little after, *He that lacketh these is  
 blind, and cannot see afar off.* And by con-  
 sequence, whosoever reclaims a Sinner,  
 who does lack those virtuous Qualities,  
 and reduces him to a right Sense of Duty  
 and Obedience, does in effect restore Sight  
 to the spiritually Blind.

ANOTHER Thing that darkens the Soul  
 of Man, is *Ignorance*. In the raw and  
 unexperienced Time of Life, the Mind has  
 but few Images impressed upon it, and is  
 very insufficient of itself to lay those few  
 so well together, as to form any useful  
 Rules of Conduct, or to judge what Me-  
 thods

thods are fitteſt to be purſued, or moſt con- S E R M.  
ducive either to preſent or future Happineſs IX.  
and Security. It is eaſily miſled by falſe  
Appearances, ſeduced into Snares and Dan-  
gers, impatient in its Deſires, weak in its  
Choice, and frail in its Reſolves. The  
ignorant and uninſtructed even in Tempo-  
ral Concerns are liable to fall into very  
great Miſcarriages: Some Method of Pro-  
ceeding, ſome Rules of Caution, ſome  
Leſſons of Oeconomy, are abſolutely ne-  
ceſſary toward diſcharging even the Buſi-  
neſs of common Life: And if no ſuch  
Precepts were to be learnt by Communi-  
cation from others, if every one were to  
remain in his primitive Ignorance, till he  
could form a ſure Judgment of what was  
moſt expedient, from his own Practice and  
Experience; his Wiſdom would come too  
late in Life, and his Affairs be irremedi-  
ably ruined, before he arrived at the Skill  
to manage them.

BUT how much more do we want the  
Information of others, in order to the At-  
tainment of ſpiritual Knowledge! For as a  
wiſe Man obſerves, *Hardly do we gueſs at  
Things that are upon Earth, and with La-  
bur*

SERM. *bour do we find the Things that are before*  
 IX. *us; but the Things that are in Heaven who*  
 hath searched out? Wisd. 9. 16.

SOME imperfect Ideas of a superior Power, some Notions of moral Rectitude and Depravity, some Apprehensions of a future Recompense, the Light of natural Reason might suggest, without the Help of any Monitor. But in how much Confusion and Perplexity are such Notions involved! In what a Labyrinth of Error must that miserable Wretch be forced to wander, who follows so blind a Guide! What a Stranger must he be to the Privileges of the Gospel, and the Terms of Salvation, without some one to direct him, and unfold the Mystery of his Redemption to him! And how many such miserable Wretches are there, even in the midst of this Christian Country, who, for want of proper Means of Instruction, are insensible of the Covenant they have made with God, and pass their Lives without any Reflexion on their own Duty, or any Expectation of the Divine Promises! How friendly, how charitable an Office is it, how decently expressive of that deep Sense  
 of

of Gratitude, wherewith we are, or ought SERM.  
to be affected, when we contemplate the IX.  
Blessings of our own Redemption, to be  
the Instruments of enlightening such poor  
Souls, by instilling, or causing to be in-  
stilled into them, the Principles of saving  
Knowledge, and guiding their Feet into  
the Way of everlasting Peace!

BUT besides *Sin* and *Ignorance*, there is  
a *third* Sort of *Blindness* incident to hu-  
man Minds, and that is *Distraction*, which  
divests the rational Soul of all its noble  
and distinguishing Endowments, and sinks  
unhappy Man below the mute and sense-  
less Part of the Creation: Even *brutal*  
*Instinct* being a surer and safer Guide than  
*disturbed Reason*, and every tame Species  
of Animals more sociable and less hurtful  
than *Humanity* thus *unmanned*. Sad Ble-  
mish of our Nature! most mortifying Re-  
flexion to consider, that our boasted Rea-  
son is not given us by any certain Tenure  
for the Term of our natural Lives, but  
that something with a human Shape and  
Voice may for many Years survive all that  
was human besides! Frail Man indeed!  
So liable to be degraded by the Loss of  
that

SERM. that very Faculty, for which he values himself so highly, and he who values himself most highly upon it, in the greatest Danger of being so degraded. Persons of the greatest Genius, of the finest Parts, and most lively Imagination, whose Brain is of a more delicate and subtle Texture than that of other Men; are observed in many of their Flights to border very nearly upon *Frenzy*, and too often they do more than border. Whilst the aspiring Soul is pursuing some lofty and elevated Conception, soaring to an uncommon Pitch, and teeming with some grand Discovery; the Ferment proves too strong for the feeble Brain to support, the Intenseness of Thought disconcerts the slender Fibres; the thin Partitions and Inclosures, that keep the Ideas separate, and ranged in a beautiful Order, are burst in sunder by the Force of the labouring Imagination, and the whole Magazine of Notions and Images lye jumbled together in a common Heap, and mingled in wild Confusion.

WHEN once the Mind has received such a total Crush, no Operation can afterwards be expected from it, that is regular,

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gular, uniform, and even; every Thing will be done by Fits and Catches, and almost each Minute will shew it in all the Diversity of Passions; unless in such Cases where the Breach was made by the Excess of some one predominant Passion. The *Gay and Merry*, the *Doleful and Complaining*, the *Fond and Loving*, the *Angry and Revengeful*, the *Silent and Sullen Humour*, succeed one another by sudden Starts, without any Occasion administered, without any Object to excite them.

SOMETIMES a short Interval of Reason begins to dawn, but is lost and intercepted again, by some odd Caprice that comes cross the Imagination, before any rational Conclusion can be formed, or any consistent Purpose of Mind be uttered. So that the Discourse which began with a seeming Earnestness, and raised an Expectation of something not only serious and coherent, but of great Importance; expatiates into idle Rambling, and goes off in *unintelligible Jargon*. The sober and solemn Look into which the Visage had composed itself, the Air and Deportment of a most reserved Gravity, breaks out in

SERM. an Instant into loud unseasonable Laughter,  
 IX. into apish Gestures, and antick Mimickry.

~ No Sense of Honour or Decency then remains, no Regard is paid to the Number or Character of the Beholders. The Restraints of *Fear* and *Shame* are quite laid aside, and stubborn Self-Will and brutal Concupiscence discover themselves without any Check or Guard.

IN some Cases indeed the Discomposure of Mind is not quite so shocking, nor the Concussion so violent, but that the shattered Ideas may recollect themselves again, the Delusion may cease, and the Mind recover its former Justness and Regularity of Thought. But in order to this, there is need of Art and Skill, of proper Remedies, and a strict Confinement of the Person so afflicted. And happy is it when all the Care and Skill that can be applied, proves effectual, through the Blessing of God, to the retrieving any Person from so lost and hopeless a Condition.


IT is Time now to consider how far those *charitable Foundations*, for the Encouragement of which you are here assembled, may be said to contribute to that  
 laudable



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laudable and beneficial Purpose, the being SERM.  
*Eyes to the spiritually blind.* As for that IX.  
Sort of *Blindness* which proceeds from  
Vice, besides the preventive Remedy of a  
virtuous Education, (of which more will  
be said under another Article) you have  
likewise wholesome Methods of Cure, if  
the Evil be not past Cure; or if so, yet  
at least you have the Means of making  
those who are incorrigible themselves, a  
Warning and Terrour to others. You  
have \* *proper Receptacles* for the Idle and  
Vagrant, the Loose and Dissolute, where  
they are kept under close Durance, and  
by the Sense of bodily Smart, (the only  
Sense which too many of them are not  
already past, before they are brought thi-  
ther) are compelled to harder Labour, than  
that honest Labour of their Calling which  
they relinquish, to addict themselves to a  
slothful and vitious Course of living. It is  
to be hoped that some of these licentious  
Vagabonds (though I fear not many) some  
who are not yet thoroughly hardened in  
their Iniquity, are restrained by a Remem-

\* *Bridewell and London Work-House.*

SERM. *IX.*  brance of the Pain and Shame they have undergone, from repeating the same Courses, lest they be brought again to the like Correction, if not from a better Principle. But whatever Effect such Chastisements may have upon themselves, at least it does good to others, and our Streets are freed during the Time of their Confinement, from a great Part of that Annoyance which most infests them.

As a Preservative against that *Blindness* which proceeds from *Ignorance*, two or three of these Foundations (\* *one* of them altogether, and † *others* in Part) are Nurseries of *Poor Children*, where great Numbers of them are instructed in Christian Knowledge, and taught how to discharge the Duties they owe to God, their Neighbour, and themselves. They are told the Danger of breaking God's Commandments, and the Advantage of observing them: They are taught what to pursue, and what to avoid, how to live piously and virtuously here, in order to be everlastingly happy hereafter. This Educa-

\* *Christ's Hospital.* † *Bridewell, and the Work-House.*

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tion is generously given to some on whom SERM.  
the Poverty or Stupidity of miserable Pa- IX.  
rents could not have bestowed the same  
Care ; to some on whom the Negligence  
of ill ones would not ; but especially  
to those who have no Parents at all, to  
make such Provision for them.

*Lastly*, IN Commiseration of those un-  
happy People, who are bereft of the dear-  
est Light, the *Light of Reason*, who are  
transported out of their Senses by the im-  
petuous Hurry of a *Lunacy* or *Frenzy*,  
who have lost all Remembrance of, or at  
least all Regard for themselves, their Af-  
fairs, their Friends, and what-ever they  
used to take Delight in ; who are not only  
unqualified to bear their Share in rational  
Conversation, but become even dangerous  
to be conversed with ; in Pity, I say, to  
their deplorable Case, you have a large  
\* *Place of Reception* appropriated to such  
Patients, where proper Care is taken that  
they shall neither harm themselves nor  
others, and where, by the Help of such

\* Bethlehem.

SERM. Physick and Diet, and other Management,  
 IX. as the Nature and Degree of each Person's  
 Distemper calls for ; many of those distracted People are, through God's Providence, and such charitable Endeavours, recovered from that inconsistent Raving and Wildness of Imagination, and restored to a sound and perfect Mind.

I have been the longer in treating of this first Instance of Charity mentioned in my Text, *the being Eyes to the Blind*, as it was capable of being considered in different Views, and under some one or more of those Views, was applicable to the greater Part of those *pious Incorporations* over which you preside as *Governors*. I must be more brief in what remains.

*Secondly*, Therefore holy *Job* thus professes for himself, in the next Article ; *Feet was I to the Lamé*. Soundness of Body, and a hale Constitution, with all the Limbs entire, and capable of exerting their respective Functions, is all the Inheritance the great Number of Mankind is born to, besides their common Title to the Protection of Divine Providence. And a good Inheritance it is, to those whose  
 Birth

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Birth and Parentage entitles them to no higher Prospects, and where it can be no Discouragement or Disappointment to them, to make no better an Appearance than their Ancestors have made before them ; unless in the Case of such of them as apply themselves to Business with uncommon Industry. It is not every one's Lot to have all the Conveniencies of Life provided for him by the Care of others, and to succeed to a Patrimony already acquired, without any Toil of his : Nor has the great Dispenser of Blessings thought fit to distribute the good Things of this Life into such even and equal Portions. The far greater Part of Men are obliged to *eat their Bread in the Sweat of their Brow*, if they will eat it at all. And if they have bodily Strength sufficient to enable them to get an honest Livelihood by the Work of their Hands, their Case is not unhappy ; but they may experience more Joy and Comfort in that humble Station, if attended with a contented Mind and good Conscience, than the riotous rich Man in the Midst of his ungodly Plenty.

SERM. BUT hard indeed is their Lot, and very  
 IX. severe the Dispensation under which they  
 are fallen, who have neither Bread to eat,  
 nor Hands wherewith to work for it : who  
 are sorely maimed and crippled in their  
 Limbs, racked with tormenting Pains,  
 or wasted with lingering Diseases. The  
 Body thus afflicted is not in a fit State to  
 be harrass'd and fatigued, in order to its  
 own Support ; but feels more Decay from  
 hard Labour, if undertaken, than Relief  
 and Sustainance from the Fruits of that La-  
 bour. Many are the Accidents in Life,  
 by which the healthiest Constitution is  
 liable to be broken, and the strongest Body  
 to be disabled, and sometimes in a very  
 ghastly and lamentable Manner. I will  
 not offend you by drawing into View such  
 a shocking and uncomfortable Scene, and  
 forbear any Description of those rueful  
 Objects of Misery, the very Relation of  
 whose Sufferings would be as grating to  
 the Ear, as the Sight of such dismal Spec-  
 tacles is offensive to the Eye. But may  
 such Forbearance prove no Detriment to  
 those miserable Creatures, nor divert the  
 intended Bounty of any generous Bene-  
 factor

factor from being applied to their Relief; who, I trust, will consider them as so much the more distressed, by how much the more loathsome they are, and reflect with himself how dreadful it must be to groan under the Anguish of those Wounds, which it is a Pain to others to see or hear of.


It is well so many of them are removed from being a publick Nuisance, by the Entertainment they find in the *Two \* capacious Hospitals* erected and endowed for that Purpose, and it is a great Pity they are not all so. Many unhappy Impressions made on tender Minds, by the sudden Encounter of such startling Objects, would be prevented; and so far the taking care of them is a common Benefit, of which every one partakes. But much more real and sensible is the Benefit, accruing to the poor Patients themselves, who are received into such hospitable Shelter, where every Thing in the Power of human Skill is attempted for their Relief, and where several Thousands of them are

\* *St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals.*

SERM. yearly recovered from very grievous Infirmities and dangerous Maladies, and restored to a Capacity of providing for themselves, by returning to the Business of their lawful Occupations. Whoever is a Contributor toward obtaining for the Sick and Impotent such seasonable Assistance, may very properly be said to be *Feet to the Lamè.*

*Thirdly,* Another Method of doing good, specified in the Text, in which the Charity of *Job* exerted itself, was the being a *Father to the Poor.* That righteous Person, in the Days of his former Prosperity, which he is now calling to Remembrance, as on the one Hand he enjoyed a great Abundance of Wealth, so on the other, had he a numerous Off-spring of his own, who all expected their Portion of that Wealth. Such Family Engagements might have furnished an Excuse to one of a selfish and narrow Spirit, for withholding his Charity from Strangers, and he might have urged, when solicited to succour the Distressed, that he had those of his own Household, for whom, by the Laws of God,



God, and Ties of Nature, he was bound SERM.  
to make Provision. But he had too en- IX.  
larged and generous a Soul to let his Boun-   
ty flow in so confined a Channel. He  
had more Trust and Confidence in God's  
Providence, than to apprehend his Fami-  
ly would ever feel the Want of what he  
bestowed in Acts of Mercy. And accor-  
dingly, as large as his Progeny was by Na-  
ture, he made it much larger by Adop-  
tion. He became the common Parent of  
such as were left without any, or which  
is next to none, who had only such  
helpless ones as could not, or such un-  
natural ones as would not provide for  
them.

A very noble Pattern for Imitation, and  
a just Reproach to such hard-hearted Chri-  
stians, as in the Midst of the greatest Af-  
fluence, plead the Care of their Families,  
in Bar of charitable Deeds ! Happy is it  
for desolate Infants, that all Men do not  
act on such churlish Principles ; that Mul-  
titudes of good Christians are found, who  
extend a paternal Care beyond the Bounds  
of their private Families ; who by a vo-  
luntary Choice make themselves *Fathers*

SERM. *to the Fatherless,* and take the Needy under their Protection; that new Benefactors still arise who make farther Additions to the standing Revenues of \* *that Hospital*, where so many Hundres of poor Orphans enjoy the Benefit not only of Food and Raiment, but of good Nurture and Instruction: From whence they are sent Abroad with previous Qualifications for being made serviceable to their Country in diverse beneficial Ways, a Regard being had to the Genius and Capacity of each; and in a fair Probability of gaining a competent Livelihood at least, if not of thriving beyond their Neighbours, and arriving at an extraordinary Degree of Wealth, by observing the Rules of Sobriety and Frugality, and by an industrious Assiduity in their several Employments. This has been the Case of many of them, and some have returned a grateful Tribute, have repaid the Charges of their Maintenance and Education with large Encrease, and have proved Benefactors themselves, where they were once the Objects of

\* *Christ's Hospital.*

Bounty. Such gracious Methods has the SERM.  
Divine Goodness of turning Crosses into IX.  
Blessings, and Afflictions into Joy and  
Happiness. It was once esteemed the  
great Calamity of those poor Children to  
be deprived of their Parents; but by be-  
ing adopted into the Number of those for  
whom such Care is taken, not a few of  
them become Gainers by their Loss, meet  
with *many Fathers* instead of *one*, and are  
put into a fairer Way of providing both  
for their present and future Welfare, than  
possibly might have been their Lot, if  
their natural Parents were still alive.

GIVE me leave now to read to you the  
Report of the several *Hospitals*, and after  
that to conclude with some Observations  
on that which appears to be the State of  
them.

HERE was read *a true Report of the  
great Number of poor Children, and other  
poor People, maintained in the several Hos-  
pitals, &c.*

THUS

SERM. THUS you see in what a plentiful

IX. Stream the Charity of those who have gone before you has flowed; you have the Satisfaction of beholding the original Endowments of the first Founders, together with such farther Donations and Bequests as the Charity of succeeding Christians has from Time to Time been adding to them, directed to the appointed Use. But while we praise God for raising up such Friends to the Poor, and bless the Memory of such pious Benefactors for having done so much, it is a great Alloy to such pleasing Reflections, to consider how much more is still wanting: And the Case of many miserable Wretches is sorely to be lamented, who can find no Place in these friendly Receptacles, capacious as they are. It cannot be said of these Hospitals, as of the Feast in the Gospel, to which *the Poor, the Halt, the Maimed and the Blind* were invited, that when all who could be found in the *Highways, or Streets, or Hedges*, were called in, there was yet Room to spare: Nor does the united Liberality of so many Ages run like the Widow's Oil  
in

in so profuse a Current, till there are no more Vessels to receive it. Little Occasion is there here of *compelling them to come in*, except to the Houses of Correction; many Halt and Maimed there are, against whom even those hospitable Gates are forced to be shut: Many empty Vessels whom there is no Oil to fill.

SERM.  
IX.



SINCE then there is so large a Field for doing farther Good, since after all the Provision that has been made, there is still a great Multitude of languishing Wretches left unprovided for; I will not distrust but that every compassionate Person of Substance and Ability, will feel himself touched with a Sense of their Misery, and contribute in such Proportion and such Manner as he shall judge proper, to the farther Endowment of some one of these Hospitals, that their Revenues may be more answerable, than they appear to be, to the pressing Demands which are daily made upon them. This is the common Case of every one of them, that they are called upon for more Help, than in their present Situation they are able to afford; and

SERM. and whoever is disposed to lend a helping

IX. Hand to any one of them, may be assured of meeting with fit Receivers of his Bounty.

THE earnest Application that is constantly made for fresh Objects to be admitted, justifies one Piece of Oeconomy, in the Management of those Places, nay indeed makes such a Regulation absolutely necessary, though it has the Appearance of great Hardship; and that is, the turning out those already admitted, when once they are pronounced *incurable*. Were the Practice otherwise, the Charity would be less extensive, and instead of circulating yearly through many Thousands, who are actually relieved, it would be wholly engrossed by one unhappy Set of People, on whom all Remedies are lost; and they would stand in the Way of others, to whom those Remedies might be applied with far better Success.

IN the mean Time, sadly to be deplored is their Case, who remain under such a Sentence. Then to be excluded Relief when their Misery is at the Height! To  
have

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have no other Prospect before them but a SERM.  
Continuation of Pain and Torment, as IX.  
long as Life itself shall endure! But thus  
it is, and must be, till it shall please God  
to put it into the Hearts of some great  
and generous Souls, to erect in this Land,  
what some other Christian Countries are  
blest with, and what is much wanted here;  
AN HOSPITAL FOR THE INCURABLE.  
There the comfortless Blind might rest in  
Peace and Security, and meet with neces-  
sary Subsistence, without wandering in the  
Dark to seek it. There the distracted  
Lunatick, whose Senses are gone past Re-  
trieve, might be immured with Safety,  
and restrained either from doing any Act  
of Violence, or exposing the lamentable  
Defect of human Nature, when there are  
no Remains of Reason to conduct it. There  
the disabled of all Sorts might wear away  
the lingring Remnant of their Lives, tho'  
without Hope of Cure, yet with all the  
Comfort and Support their calamitous E-  
state will bear. But whether in this, or  
any other Way, it is the Duty of Chri-  
stians to be helpful to one another, and  
they

SERM. they who are Strong are required to bear

IX. *the Infirmities of the Weak.*



*NOW to God the Father, God the Son,  
and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all  
Honour, &c.*







## SERMON X.

A Spittal Sermon at St. *Bride's*, on  
*Tuesday* in *Easter-Week*, 1731.



2 TIM. iii. 2. Former Part.

*For Men shall be Lovers of their  
own selves.*—



AD the Words I have now SERM.  
read to you, been delivered in X.  
the Way of Precept or Instruc-  
tion ; as a Rule of Life and  
Manners to be observed : Had the Apo-  
stle, when he said, *Men shall be Lovers of  
their own selves*, intended to recommend  
Self-Love as a necessary Christian Quali-  
fication, and to inculcate it as a Gospel  
VOL. III. X Duty ;

SERM. Duty ; I should have made Choice of a very  
 X. improper Text, and most unsuitable to  
 the Subject on which I am now to treat.

BUT neither is so morose and churlish a Temper of Mind, or a Behaviour suitable to it, any where recommended in Holy Scripture ; at least not without great Limitations and Restrictions : Much less can any such Doctrine be inferred from the Passage now before us, which, it is evident from the Context, is not to be understood in a Mandatory or Directive, but in a Prophetick or Premonitory Sense ; not as prescribing what ought to be done, but preparing us, by an antecedent Warning, for what, in Fact, would come to pass, in Defiance of the plainest and clearest Directions to the contrary.

FOR mark how St. *Paul* introduces it, *Know this also, says he, that in the last Days perilous Times shall come. For Men shall be Lovers of their own selves ; covetous, Boasters, proud, Blasphemers, disobedient to Parents, unthankful, unholy ; without natural Affection, Truce-breakers, false Accusers, incontinent, fierce, Despisers of those that are good ; Traytors, heady, high-minded,*

*minded, Lovers of Pleasures more than* SERM.  
*Lovers of God.* X.

HERE you see how far Self-Love is from being proposed to our Practice, as commendable and praise-worthy; when you find it standing in the Front of a black and dismal Catalogue of the most odious and abhorred Qualities; and those are justly represented as *perilous Times*, when such enormous and malignant Affections should generally prevail.

I have no Design to cast an Aspersion on the Days in which we live, or to insinuate that those *perilous Times* are now actually come, from the little Regard great Numbers of Men are seen and known to shew to any thing but themselves; for however obvious it may be to every one's Observation, that too many such there are, whose whole Turn of Mind is bent upon nothing else, but how to enrich and aggrandize themselves, without caring by what Methods, at whose Cost or Disadvantage, or whom they trample under, so they can but rise upon their Ruins: Whatever Instances may be produced of gross and notorious Corruption, of Persons so

SERM. abandoned to filthy Lucre, as, for the

X. Sake of some private and personal Emolument, to prostitute their Consciences, betray their Trust, forfeit their Honour, and debase their Character ; yet on the other Hand, it cannot but be acknowledged, that such a Conduct is far from being new ; that there always have been, and it is to be feared, always will be such self-seeking and narrow-spirited Men ; and, though, upon a Comparison between these and former Times, it should appear, that the Number of them is greatly increased, that Men grasp at private Advantages, in Preference to the publick Good, more shamelessly and avowedly than heretofore ; yet perhaps there may be found, in Allay to this, so many generous and disinterested Spirits, who scorn all little and mercenary Views ; who rather chuse to live in Meanness and Obscurity, than advance themselves to an unnatural Height of Wealth and Grandeur, on base and dishonest Terms ; who never received the Wages of Iniquity, nor took of the *accursed Thing* : It is possible, I say, there may be so many of this Sort among us, as  
 may


may over-balance and make some Atone-SERM.  
 ment for the ungenerous Craft and con-X.  
 tracted Schemes of the Selfish and De-  
 signing.

IT is plain at least from the daily In-  
 crease of Revenues which is added to your  
 Hospitals, and the liberal Promotion of  
 other pious and charitable Works, that  
 however *the Love of many may have waxed*  
*cold*, there is a Warmth and Fervour still  
 alive in many other Breasts, which excites  
 them to do worthy and beneficial Acts,  
 and lay themselves out in *the Labour of*  
*Love*.


THAT I may contribute, if possible, to  
 the making Men less tenacious, and more  
 communicative, I shall make it my pre-  
 sent Business to set the two Characters in  
 an opposite Light, and to shew,

*First*, THE Odioufness of Self-Love.  
 And,

*Secondly*, THE Amiableness of a gene-  
 rous and publick Spirit.

SERM. THERE is indeed a Kind or Degree of  
X. Self-Love, which is not only innocent, but  
 necessary. The Laws of Nature strongly  
incline every Man to be solicitous for his  
own Welfare, to guard his Person, by a  
due Precaution, from Hurts and Acci-  
dents; not to expose it to needless Ha-  
zards; to provide Food and Raiment, and  
all Things needful for his bodily Suste-  
nance, by honest Industry and Labour, if  
it is not his Lot to be born to an Inhe-  
ritance ready acquired for him by the  
Care and Industry of others; or which, in  
the Course of providential Events, may  
happen to befall him: To repair, as far as  
he is able, such Decays as may attend his  
bodily Constitution, by proper Helps, and  
the best Means that are afforded him, and  
much more to make it his grand Concern  
to secure the everlasting Happiness of his  
immortal Part.

SUCH a Self-Love as this, goes little far-  
ther than Self-Preservation, without which  
Principle implanted in us, the human Spe-  
cies would be soon lost and extinguished,  
and the Work of our great Creator be de-  
feated, if every Individual were not both  
allowed,

allowed, and also encouraged and excited, SERM.  
in a laudable and justifiable Sense, to take X,  
Care of one. 

BUT that which *St. Paul* speaks of with Abhorrence, is Love merely selfish, that both begins and terminates in a Man's single Person, exclusive of all tender Regards for any one else: When every Thought, and Wish, and Action, much more every Endeavour that is attended with Trouble and Expence, is looked upon as mis-employed and cast away, of which any other besides himself is to reap any Part of the Advantage: This is, in the worst and most criminal Sense, taking Care of one only.


HE who stands upon such Terms with the World, and is, by long and confirmed Experience, known to do so, is a Sort of Apostate from human Society, and deserts that Station in Life, wherein the Divine Providence had placed him: He sets a dangerous Precedent, if all Men were so ungracious as to be led by his Example, of dissolving those Bands and Ligaments by which all Communities are held together, and rendring Mankind as unfociable

SERM. Creatures as the Savages which inhabit  
 X. the Desert. The Foundation on which  
 Society is built, is the Occasion one Man  
 has for the Assistance of another, and the  
 Impossibility of subsisting in Peace and  
 Security, without mutual Succour, and  
 an interchangeable Discharge of good and  
 friendly Offices.

IF we will but look into our own Nature, and reflect on the End and Design of our Creation, the Reach and Extent of our Faculties, our Subordination to one another, and the Insufficiency of every Man, as he stands by himself alone; we shall soon be convinced, that doing Good, and affording each other reciprocal Assistance, is that for which we were formed and fashioned; that we are linked together by our common Wants, as well as by Inclination, and that Tenderness of Disposition, and natural Sympathy, that is implanted in us.

THAT we are born and educated, that we enjoy either Necessaries or Comforts, that we are preserved from Perils in our greener, or ever arrive at riper Years, next under the Watchfulness and Protection of  
 Almighty



Almighty God, is owing to the Care of SERM.  
 others: And can any thing be more just X.  
 and reasonable, than that we too, in our   
 Turn, should give that Succour we have  
 received, and *do*, not only as *we* willingly  
*would*, but as we actually *have been done*  
*unto*?


THERE is a certain Proportion of Trouble and Uneasiness, as well as of Pleasure and Satisfaction, that must of Necessity be born by the Race of Men; insomuch that he, who will not sustain some Share of the former, is unworthy to partake of any of the Comforts of the latter: He does not act a fair Part on the Stage of Life, but deserves to be excluded the Benefits of Society, and left to converse and entertain himself with the only Person in the World, for whom he has the least Concern, and to whom he is willing to do any Act of Kindness, and that is, his solitary Self.

BUT here the Selfing will interpose, and say; It is true, I have Occasion for the Help of others, and the Help of others I have: I have Occasion for the Attendance of Servants, and by Servants I am attended: I want to be supplied with those  
 Con-

SERM. Conveniences of Life, which Artificers

X. provide in their respective Occupations, and  
 I am supplied accordingly: So long as I am furnished with sufficient Store to pay them an Equivalent, I am in no Danger of being left destitute of any Thing that Money can procure. This is the Commerce I carry on in the World, thus I approve myself a social Member of the Commonwealth. But what have I to do, in parting with my Substance to them, who can give nothing to me in Return? Let those, who are apprehensive of future Want, hasten it upon themselves, if they please, by divesting themselves of what is real and in actual Possession, with the Hope of having it returned to them, in the Time of their Distress: But when that Time of Distress is come, where will they find their Pay-Master? For my part, I love to deal in more substantial Securities, and am willing to run all Hazards of being denied Relief myself, when I cannot purchase it.

To such ungodly Reasoning does the inordinate Love of *Mammon* seduce the hard-hearted and worldly minded Man; so forgetful does it make him of his dependent

dent Condition, and the Uncertainty of SERM.  
earthly Riches, by how many sudden and X.  
unexpected Calamities, that boasted Wealth   
in which he placed so prophane a Confidence, is liable to be taken from him.

AND sometimes we see it does please Almighty God to make Examples of this Sort; to humble such haughty and self-confiding Men, by reducing them from their towering Height, and all the Wantonness of Prosperity, to the Extremity of Want and Misery. And whenever this happens to be the Case; Who are then so pitifully abjected? Who are such supple Petitioners for Favour or Bounty, as they who would confer none, when they had it in their Power? Then they can talk of the Vicissitude of human Affairs, and of the Obligation incumbent on Men to be helpful to one another, from their Subjection to the same Accidents, and the Possibility that what has happened to one, may befall another.

SUCH Arguments, though they come with a very ill Grace from the Mouth of one, who has been known to have spoke so different a Language, and to have acted so opposite a Part, do often indeed make  
an

314 *A Spittal Sermon at St. Bride's,*  
SERM. an Impression on tender Hearts, and draw  
X. not only Compassion but Relief, from the  
Generous and Good-natured, who are more  
apt to look back with Pity on the Grandeur from which he is fallen, and the unhappy Change of his Condition, than to reflect with Indignation and Reproaches, on the Pride and Insolence, with which he enjoyed his former Prosperity, and the unprofitable Greediness with which he engrossed the Fruits of it to himself.

BUT the universal Hatred which such a Person naturally contracts, will not always be suppressed ; nor his former Aversion to doing good Offices, be covered by a charitable Oblivion, nor be lost under the soft Relentings, and a melting Commiseration of his present Sufferings. Some free Speakers there will be, who have experienced his past Cruelty, and how utterly void he was of all Yearnings of Pity and humane Sentiments, and will not be restrained from breaking out into Insults and Reproaches ; which, though far from being commendable in *them*, must be so much the more grating to *him*, in as much as he is conscious to himself of the Justice of such Reflections, and that as bitter and  
pungent

pungent as they are, he has well deserved SERM.  
them. X.

IN short, since every Man has an equal Right to confine all his Care and Endeavours to the promoting his own separate Interest, that any one Man has; what must be the Consequence, if such a narrow Way of thinking and acting should become universal? How soon would the choicest and most valuable Blessings of Life, which are mainly secured to us by social and relative Engagements, how soon would all Order and Harmony, Love and Friendship, terminate at once, if every Man were to regard himself alone, and to extend his Care no farther!

SUCH a Situation would put an End to all Intercourse and Commerce; Men would be destitute of all Confidence and Security, and afraid to trust each other; so that all those brave and generous Thoughts, which ought to be in all, and are in many Breasts employed in promoting common Good, and contriving for publick Welfare, would then be confined to a narrow Compass; our Care and Concern, our Counsels and Devices, would be contracted to these two Points, how to avoid the  
stronger,

SERM. stronger, and where to fall upon the weaker.

X. NOT to stretch forth a Hand to raise  
 up the Dejected ; to have no Bowels of  
 Compassion for those who are plunged in  
 the Depth of Misery ; to be pitiless and  
 unconcerned at the most bitter Calamities  
 of any one besides, so long as we our-  
 selves are fortunate and at Ease, is a raising  
 out the first Principles of Humanity, as  
 well as treading under Foot the more sub-  
 lime Precepts of the Gospel. It is a Vio-  
 lation of all the Rules that ought to direct  
 us in the Government of our Lives ; nor  
 is it possible for one so uncharitable and  
 unrelenting, to have any Fear of God,  
 any Regard to Man, any Sense of the Dig-  
 nity of his own Nature, or indeed any  
 one Spark of Religion or Virtue alive in him.

AND this may suffice to shew that odi-  
 ous and malignant Quality of Selfishness,  
 or mere Self-Love. Let us now consider,

*Secondly,* The Amiability of a gene-  
 rous and publick Spirit.

HE who has a Heart truly open and  
 enlarged, over and above that reasonable  
 Thoughtfulness and Contrivance, with  
 which every prudent Man will be posses-  
 sed,

fed, about *providing for his own*, and SERM.  
 how to proportion his Expences to his X.  
 Revenue, as well as how to obtain more  
 ample Acquisitions, if fair and honourable  
 Methods of advancing his Fortunes pre-  
 sent themselves in his Way; I say, be-  
 yond this domestick Care, he will have  
 Room enough in his Thoughts to let  
 them be employed sometimes in the Ser-  
 vice of his Friends, his Neighbours, and  
 his Country; which have not only his best  
 Wishes and hearty Desires for the Success  
 of their Affairs, but he makes it his Stu-  
 dy to promote their Welfare, and puts him-  
 self to a voluntary Trouble and Expence,  
 in order to extricate them from Difficul-  
 ties, and free them from Dangers, and to  
 remove such Impediments as obstruct the  
 Progress of any good and laudable Design.  
 The Consideration uppermost in his Mind,  
 is, how much Benefit will be received, what  
 Advantages procured in the main, from such  
 a Scheme or Project, or Method of acting,  
 without scrupulously weighing, whether  
 his Share of the Advantage will equal, or  
 fall short of the Proportion he bears in the  
 Charge of bringing it to a successful Issue.  
 If he has contributed more than others,  
 he

SERM. he never grutches nor repines at it : He  
 X. has the Pleasure of reflecting that a beneficial Act is done, and that although he has not been able to animate others to promote it in the same Degree with himself, he has however been instrumental in causing some Good to be done, and the Receivers are heartily welcome both to his Pains, and his Contributions.

THIS may appear but a poor Satisfaction to little and groveling Minds, who have no Idea of any Joy that can arise from the Reflection on any Thing that is not attended with present Profit, and look upon every Thing as a losing Bargain, where more is expended than received. But large and capacious Souls have far nobler Sentiments ; they know how to value and enjoy a Loss, and find a secret Pleasure in the Diminution of their Fortune, when honourably and worthily employed.

WE are sure that God Almighty, who gives every Thing, and receives Nothing, is a most perfectly blessed and happy Being ; and the nearer we resemble him in any of our Actions, by so much we advance our own Happiness. To be both able and willing to make others happy, is a small  
 Ray



Ray of the Divine Power and Goodness; SERM.  
 and the Joy, which arises in the Soul of X.  
 a compassionate Man, from the Sense of his  
 having raised up the Dejected, comforted  
 the Disconsolate, and refreshed the Faint  
 and Languishing, who till relieved by his  
 pious Bounty, were in a perishing Condi-  
 tion; the Joy, I say, which the Sense of  
 this must excite in the Breast of such a  
 Benefactor, is inexpressible, far exceeding  
 not only the most exquisite of sensual De-  
 lights, but even that Pleasure and Satisfac-  
 tion which is felt by those Objects of his  
 Beneficence, upon the happy Change of  
 their Condition, when they find themselves  
 so seasonably rescued from their calamitous  
 Estate, restored to Ease, and blessed with  
 a comfortable Subsistence.

SUCH a friendly Promoter of the Good  
 of others may survey the Objects of his  
 Love, with some Degree of that Satisfaction  
 wherewith God beheld his Workmanship,  
 when he had finished the several Parts of  
 the Creation, and pronounced *that they  
 were good.*

To such as have the Heart thus to dis-  
 pose of Riches, they are indeed a Blessing;

SERM. all that they are good for besides, beyond  
 X. what is sufficient to provide for us the Ne-  
 cessaries of Life, is but fantastical and ima-  
 ginary. Neither a Man's Life, nor his  
 Happiness in it, consists *in the Abundance*  
*of the Things which he possesses.* Neither  
 the covetous Rich Man, that hoards his  
 Wealth, nor the luxurious Rich Man,  
 that expends it in Pomp and Pagean-  
 try, has, in Truth, any other Good in it,  
 than the *beholding it with his Eyes.* It  
 may procure him indeed the empty Satis-  
 faction of being gazed at, or talked of:  
 But alas! How little of solid Good is either  
 of these attended with? An odd, ridicu-  
 lous, or extravagant Figure, will attract  
 more Eyes, than the gayest Equipage, or  
 most costly Furniture. And as for a Man's  
 Name and Character, who would not ra-  
 ther choose not to have it mentioned at  
 all, than not mentioned with Respect?

THIS seems to be the only End that is  
 sought after by those who delight in Show  
 and Pomp: And yet this very End might  
 be much better compassed by another Way  
 than by that which they affect. For does  
 it not give a sweeter Fragrancy to a Man's  
 Name,

Name, and does not every one speak of SERM.  
him with higher Expressions of Honour X.  
and Esteem; who has been a common Be-  
nefactor; and relieved a Multitude of ne-  
cessitous Persons, that were destitute of all  
Support, though in his own Garb and Ap-  
pearance; he may differ but little from the  
Vulgar, than of him who shines in the  
greatest Splendor, and feeds a Multitude  
of idle and useles Mouths, whose only  
Business is to increase his State, and swell  
out his Retinue?

I AM far from recommending it as the  
chief Aim a Man should pursue, in doing  
kind and friendly Offices, and being ser-  
viceable to those among whom he con-  
verses, that such a Behaviour may gain  
him a general Applause and Approbation;  
and make him honoured and esteemed :  
He who is beneficent upon that Principle  
only, can be said to do only an Act politi-  
cally and prudentially commendable, but it  
is no Act of Religion. But when the pri-  
mary Intention of any Deed of Charity  
is directed to the Glory of God, and a De-  
sire of pleasing Him is the governing Mo-  
tive which excited the Actor to the Per-  
formance

SERM. formance of it; such a one has a secure

X. Title to the Effect of God's Promises, and an Heavenly Reward; and has likewise a reasonable Prospect of obtaining the Goodwill of Men, which seldom fails of accompanying such Actions, whether the Author was at all influenced by any such Expectation, or not.

I AM willing to hope, that the greater Part of the Founders and Endowers of those charitable Incorporations committed to your Inspection, were acted by that better and more sublime Principle, and have been rewarded accordingly: They have certainly in Fact been the Promoters of much Good, and the Redressers of great Evil: They have been instrumental in making great Numbers easy and happy in this mortal State, and afforded them the probable Means of acquiring a more durable Happiness in that which is to come: And I charitably hope, that no Unthankfulness or Misapplication will render such Donations ineffectual with Respect to the Receivers, nor any unwarrantable and sinister Aim in conferring them, unrewardable on the Part of the Givers.

AND

AND here, that it may appear to how good Purposes your several Hospitals have been employed ; how many miserable Objects have from Time to Time been relieved from the worst Distresses, by being admitted into those friendly Places of Reception, and how much farther so useful and commendable a Design may be still extended, give me Leave, according to your annual Custom, to read to you,

S E R M  
X.

*A true REPORT of the great Number of poor Children, and other poor People, maintained in the several Hospitals, under the pious Care of the Lord-Mayor, Commonalty, and Citizens of London, the Year last past,*

[ *Here the Report was read.* ]

I may now be expected to subjoin something by way of Exhortation, to stir up the Liberality of well-disposed Christians toward the Enlargement of these Foundations, with a special Application to their several Institutions.

SERM. BUT having done that twice already,  
 X. when I have formerly been called to this  
 Office, and urged such Arguments in Fa-  
 vour of the respective Kinds of Charity,  
 as I hoped might be most prevailing, I  
 rather chuse to refer you to what I have  
 already said, than either to repeat the same,  
 or seek for new ones. And I trust, that  
 what has been now offered in Recommen-  
 dation of a generous and publick Spirit in  
 general, if it proves of any Avail at all,  
 will of Course be applied to the Promotion  
 of some one or more of those special  
 Branches of Charity, for the Encourage-  
 ment of which you are now assembled.

HOWEVER, one particular Case I shall  
 briefly touch upon, and it is that of the  
*Incurables*. The last Time I spoke from  
 this Place, I took Occasion to lament the  
 deplorable Condition of those forlorn  
 Wretches, who had such a Sentence pro-  
 nounced upon them, who are excluded  
 from the Participation of such kindly Re-  
 lief, when they most want it, and turned  
 abroad to shift for themselves, when they  
 are most incapable of exerting any of the  
 Powers and Functions either of their  
 Mind

Mind or Body : Disabled in their Limbs, disturbed in their Senses, destitute of Friends : Whilst their present Anguish is heightened by the forest of all Aggravations, the Despair of ever being better.

S E R M.  
X,  


IN Commiseration of the unhappy Circumstances of such hopeless Creatures, I was led to express a distant Wish, that God might put it into the Heart of some liberal Benefactor, to erect an Hospital appropriated to such Patients : And it was not long before I had the Satisfaction of perceiving that such a Design was actually formed, and partly carried into Execution. I have no Authority to affirm, and it would be too assuming to suppose, that so commendable and beneficial an Undertaking took its Rise from any Hint which was then dropped : It may have seemed good to God, the supreme Fountain of all Mercy, to possess the Souls of those who first set on foot, and are zealous in forwarding this Work, with so pious a Resolution, without the Suggestion of any earthly Monitor : Praised be the Divine Providence, that so desirable and necessary a Scheme is not only in Agitation, but al-

SERM. ready begun, and the Benefits of it actual-  
 X. ly felt by a considerable Number of un-  
 happy People, and a separate Fund estab-  
 lished; so that they who are particularly  
 touched with a Sense of such Misfortunes,  
 and willing to contribute, according to  
 their Abilities, toward making the State  
 of such Objects more easy and comforta-  
 ble, may know where to apply even a  
 small Sum, in such Manner, as, by being  
 added to other Sums, directed to the same  
 Use, cannot fail of procuring a proporti-  
 onable Degree of Help and Refreshment  
 for those whose Lot it must otherwise be,  
 to remain most friendless and disconsolate  
 Out-casts.

I HOPE there will be none so cruel as  
 to alledge, that, when once a Case appears  
 to be desperate, when all the Art of the  
 Physician, and all the Power of Medicine  
 is seen to be ineffectual, it is to no pur-  
 pose to take any farther Care of such a Pa-  
 tient; that any Help bestowed upon him,  
 is but adding to his Sufferings and prolong-  
 ing his Misery; and consequently that our  
 Labour and Expence about him may not  
 be laid out in vain; that he ought to be  
 given



given up to his unhappy Fate, and left to SERM. perish without Redress. This surely is X. carrying the Point of good Husbandry much too far, to the Subversion not only of common Charity, but of common Humanity.

FOR though I have before allowed, and do still allow, that the Exclusion of such Objects, miserable as they are, from the Hospitals appropriated to the Curable, is both a justifiable and necessary Piece of OEconomy; yet sure it becomes so much the more reasonable for other Hospitals, or Branches of Hospitals, to be appropriated to *them*.

WILL it be said, what Good can they receive from such Foundations, if erected? Alas! the Fortunate and Flourishing, who live in a full Affluence of Wealth, and enjoy a Luxuriancy of Health and Strength, little imagine how sensible a Blessing many Things which they wantonly waste, and set no manner of Value upon, would prove to poor languishing Wretches, if conferred upon them: That even those Maladies which are past all Cure, may however be made easy: That though Re-  
flecting

SERM. storing Medicines can have no Effect, yet

X. Palliating ones may be successfully applied; and the bare Mitigation of Smart, though it is sure to return again, is a very desirable Relief. To those who have groaned under a continued Torture, every Abatement of Anguish, every Interval even of Stupefaction is a Degree of Pleasure; but the Absence of Pain, joined with a Sense of its being absent, is a kind of Paradise.

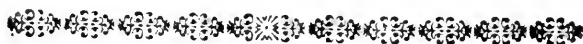
THUS is human Life, even in its most lost and deplorable State, capable of being profited, and of enjoying the Fruits of such charitable Gifts, as the pious Liberality of good Christians has, or shall destine to the Patients Use and Comfort.

*MAY THE GOD OF LOVE continue to raise up a Succession of friendly Contributors toward the Relief of such Objects, and may He prosper the State of all those charitable Communities, of which you have the Care and Management, and grant that all who are Partakers of your Bounty, may prove grateful to their Benefactors, useful to the Commonwealth, and give Praise and Glory to Almighty God. Amen.*



# SERMON XI.

A Sermon before the Lord-Mayor,  
*Jan. 30, 1709-10.*



I KINGS xxi. 9, 10.

*Proclaim a Fast, and set Naboth  
on high among the People :  
And set two Men, Sons of Belial,  
before him, to bear Witness against  
him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme  
God and the King : and then  
carry him out and stone him, that  
he may die.*



HERE is scarce any one In-  
stance of the shedding innocent  
Blood, recorded in Holy Scrip-  
ture, which has not, at some  
Time or other, been applied to the Occa-  
sion of this Day's Solemnity, even that of  
our

SERM.  
XI.

SERM. our \* blessed Saviour not excepted, whose

XI. Steps we have with one Voice declared in the Service of the Church the blessed Martyr chearfully to have followed. But here indeed it concerns us to tread warily. We can only affirm of the greatest Saints and brightest Luminaries of the Church, that they have made some faint Approaches toward that great Exemplar, without presuming to equal either the Merits or the Sufferings of any meer Man to those of our crucified Redeemer: In all other Parallels there is less Danger of Excess, since most of them will be found, in many Circumstances, to fall short of the Fact committed on this Day.

Now although in such a comparative Way of arguing, where we single out some remarkable Passage from the Records of past Ages, and adapt it, as far as it will naturally bear, to some After-Occurrence that has fallen out nearer our own Times, it cannot be expected that both the Cases should be in all Respects exactly the same, without the least Variation; yet when we

\* Second Collect for the Day.

can point out some of the principal and Master-Strokes of each of them, which have a near Resemblance of one another, when the Methods and Ways of acting, the Motives and Inducements to it, with other concurrent Circumstances, are the same ; this may be enough to justify the Choice of the Subject, and make it serve at least as a fair Introduction to the Matter in Debate.

I mention this, because of one remarkable Disagreement, which you must needs have been before-hand with me in observing, between the Case of *Naboth*, and that of this Day's *Royal Sufferer*, who as he had lived the Ornament, so died the *Martyr* of the *English* Church and Monarchy : And that is, that in the former of them, an innocent Subject was murdered by a wicked King (or at least by his Instruments and Agents, not without his Approbation and Consent, as appeared by his subsequent Behaviour, in seizing his Inheritance, as well as by his own Confession, when he submitted to the Prophet's Charge, and humbled himself for it) whereas in the latter, a just and pious King

SERM. King was deprived at once of his Crown  
 XI. and Life by wicked and rebellious Subjects.

But there are other Resemblances between them, that will make Amends for this Disparity. And therefore I shall proceed;

*First,* To draw a Parallel between the two Cases, and shew what is common to them both.

*Secondly,* To consider the Nature and Consequences of the Fact committed on this Day: And

*Thirdly,* I SHALL conclude with one of two Moral Reflections:

*First,* I AM to draw a Parallel between the two Cases; and show what is common to them both. Here then we may observe, that the Persons compared were both good Men: Both were murdered with a pretended Show of Justice, and with religious Solemnities: Both for the same Cause, because they would not part with *the Inheritance of their Fathers*: Neither of them suffered singly; but the Enemies  
 of

January 30, 1709-10.

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of each extended their Malice to the whole Race of them. SERM.  
XI.

FIRST I say they were both good Men. That *Naboth* was so, we may very fairly conjecture from his Behaviour in the Matter of the Vineyard; and from the Severity of God's Wrath toward *Ahab* and his Family, for unjustly putting him to Death. For although the Murder even of a wicked Man, either by false Accusation, or secret Treachery, is a very heinous and detestable Thing; (and that Life that is forfeited to Justice by a Thousand real Crimes, yet if innocent *quoad hoc*, and taken away by wicked Subornation, on weak and insufficient Evidence, for that which is not a Crime, or which was not committed, will derive a Sentence of Bloodguiltiness, nay of the shedding innocent Blood, on the Contrivers and Actors in such an Execution;) yet we cannot suppose, that this is, in so excessive a Degree, provoking, or that it entails the Divine Vengeance on so many Generations, as when the Person condemned is eminent for Piety and Virtue.

IF

SERM. IF indeed we were to judge of Things  
 XI. by their first Appearance, the Carriage of  
*Naboth* toward *Abab*, in denying him his  
 Vineyard, might seem to have been very  
 churlish and undutiful, especially when  
 offered a *better Vineyard* in Exchange for  
 it, or an Equivalent in *Money*. And the  
 King's condescending way of Address,  
 when he thus expresses himself, *If it shall  
 seem good to thee, and if it please thee* ;  
 might be thought to have deserved a bet-  
 ter Answer than, *I will not give thee my  
 Vineyard*.

BUT we must consider, on the other  
 Hand, that the Thing which the King  
 desired, was absolutely unlawful, and ex-  
 pressly forbid by the Command of God ;  
 the smallest Ceremony of whose Appoint-  
 ment could not be dispensed with. We  
 may learn from *Lev. 25.* and *Numb. 36.*  
 how straitly the *Jews* were enjoined to  
 look upon the Inheritance of their Fathers  
 as sacred : The very numerical Lands and  
 Possessions were to be continually preserv-  
 ed in the respective Families to which  
 they were allotted, and the present Occu-  
 pants had no Power of totally alienating  
 them,



them, but only till they could be redeemed by one of their Kin, and not so long as that, if a Year of *Jubilee* should first happen, when all Things were to be restored as at the Beginning: And even that temporary Alienation was not to be made, but under the Pressure of extreme Necessity, which it seems was not *Naboth's* Case. So that he looked on the Proposal, as a Thing he could not with a safe Conscience comply with, and therefore speaks, you see, with some Abhorrence of it, (though not altogether so bluntly as *Ahab* repeated it to his Wife) *The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the Inheritance of my Fathers unto thee.* From this, I say, and the other Consideration before-mentioned, we may reasonably infer that *Naboth* was a Man of Uprightness and Integrity; though the Scripture has distinguished him by no other Title, but that of *Naboth the Jeshraelite.*

BUT we have better Arguments than bare Conjectures and remote Conclusions to induce us to believe, that our *martyred Sovereign* was highly deserving of this Character, of which we have all the Proof and Demonstration that 'tis possible for

SERM. one Man to have of the Integrity of  
 XI. another.

IT is true, God alone is an infallible Judge and Discerner of the Heart ; he only beholds with an unerring Eye the Uprightness or Obliquity of human Thoughts and Intentions ; and therefore none but he can absolutely and decisively pronounce of any Person, that he is either holy and sincere, or wicked and prophane.

BUT we Men must form our Judgment from the outward Actions, and wheresoever we find a regular Conduct, where all the Duties to God and Man, as far as we can observe, are exactly and punctually discharged, where there are no visible Infractions of Divine or Human Laws, or none but such as may be imputed to human Frailty ; we are to look upon a Person so qualified as a Man of Probity and Virtue.

THIS is no more than is due in *common Justice*. But *Christian Charity* will oblige us yet farther, even where there are some suspicious Appearances, if the Character of the Person be in other Respects unblemished ; to err (if we must err)

err) on the better Side, and make a favourable Construction. SERM.  
XI.

THIS is spoken at large, and not that there is any Occasion for this last Supposal, with Regard to the Subject I am upon: There being Nothing in the Behaviour of that *excellent Prince*, that has so much as an indirect Aspect, Nothing I mean that can affect his general Character.

WHEN I affirm this, I consider him chiefly as a private Christian, for in his *Royal Capacity* indeed, as we find him represented by the designing Artifice of his malicious and restless Enemies, there are faulty Appearances enough. And yet the very Persons, who thus industriously blackened and defamed him, and loaded him with so many unjust Reproaches on the Account of his *Regal Administration*; (which can never be so excellent, as to give no Handle to the *Faction*, the *Guilty*, and the *Disappointed*, to censure and malign it, and will be always liable to Misconstruction, the Reasons of State being so *Mysterious*) yet could never charge on him any gross Misbehaviour in Point of

SERM. Moral Duty, any one habitual Vice, or

XI. indulged Passion, though they wanted not  
 Means of prying into his most secret Commerce and private Correspondence; and nothing, we know, is so quick-sighted as Malice.

HIS Devotion to God was regular and constant both in publick and in private, and that, not cold and formal, but with an ardent Zeal and inflamed Affection. In the midst of the perplexing Cares that encompass a Throne, and with which *his* Throne was peculiarly beset; he always found Leisure for the Exercises of Religion: He was never so dazzled with the Splendor of an *earthly* Crown, as not to prefer before it a *heavenly* and *immortal* one: Nor was he ever unmindful of this important Truth, that as *his* Subjects were accountable to *him*, (though in the End they quite inverted that Order) so was he himself to render an Account of *his* Actions at a greater Tribunal before the King of Kings.

IN the Midst of the highest Plenty, and all the Means of gratifying a sensual Appetite that *Royal Affluence* could administer,

fter, he was remarkably temperate, chaste, SERM.  
 and sober. His conjugal Affection has XI.  
 been even imputed as a *Crime*. He was  
 an inviolable Observer of his matrimonial  
 Vow, a Virtue not *too common* in the  
 World, a very rare one indeed in *Princes*.  
 Nor was he less eminent for Clemency and  
 Justice, and a tender Regard for the Wel-  
 fare of his Subjects.

AND if we consider him in the last Scene  
 of his Life, in his Behaviour both before  
 and at the Scaffold; we may observe an  
 admirable Composition of Christian Meek-  
 ness and Royal Grandeur, how under the  
 extremest Pressures he would never be  
 prevailed with, to do any thing unbe-  
 coming either the *Christian* or the *King*.

As he had lived, he dyed a true Pro-  
 fessor of the purest reform'd Faith: And  
 his Character has this Advantage, even  
 from the *reproachful* Manner of his Death;  
 that his last Declaration so publickly made  
 in the Face of the World, was not ca-  
 pable of being denied, or misrepresented.  
 Whereas had they dispatched him by Poy-  
 son or Assassination, or any other Way of  
 Murder, that had carried less of Pomp

SERM. and Ostentation; the Accusation had been  
 XI. obvious, that he died a *Papist*, which his  
 Enemies would not have failed to have reported, and his Friends could not so convincingly have disproved.

HIS admirable and instructing Legacy to his Children, his praying for his Murderers, his patient Resignation to the Will of God, and indeed all the several Parts of his Department at that dismal Juncture; do conspire to raise in us the highest Esteem and Veneration for his Memory. And sure we may allow to one who was endued with so large a Share of Virtues, with so inconsiderable a Mixture of Defects, the Character and Denomination of a good Man. I mean in a qualified Sense, for, in an absolute Sense, we know who has told us, there is none good but God. And this is one Point in which *Naboth* and he agree.

THE next is, that they both were murdered with a pretended show of Justice, and with religious Solemnities.

IN order to *Naboth's* Murder there was a *Fast proclaimed, a solemn Assembly called, a formal Accusation forged, and suborned*  
 Witnesses

Witnesses produced. The principally intended Wickedness was thus ushered in with a preparatory Combination of other Crimes; thus closely was the Train of Mischiefs laid, by the Contrivance of wicked *Jezebel*; that *Hypocrisy*, *Perjury* and *false Judgment* should be the Prelude and Introduction to *Murder*.

SERM.  
XI.

AND was not this exactly the Case of our *Royal Sufferer*? Was there not a Day of *Humiliation* appointed? Was not the nefarious Business in Agitation dignified with the specious Title of *the Lord's Work*? Did not the chief Authors of that Cruelty pretend to be *seeking the Lord*, whilst their Instruments were embroiling their Hands in the Blood of the *Lord's Anointed*?

How horribly did they profane the Name of God, whilst they invoked him, as necessary to their Bloody Machinations, and besought him to strengthen their Hands in that diabolical Work! How wretchedly did they pervert his Word, which teaches all Obedience and Reverence to Princes; whilst even from those sacred Writings they would pretend to justify not only the highest Insolence and Contempt,

SERM. but even the actual Murder of his *lawful*

XI. *Vice-gerent!* To how base Purposes were the Ordinances of Religion prostituted, whilst they fasted for the Success of that impious Act, which it requires a perpetual Fast to deprecate the Guilt of: And *made long Prayers only for a Pretense,* when they were making a Royal Widow, and devouring Houses and Lands, stately Palaces, and princely Revenues with insatiable Greediness! How ill did it accord with their professed Purity and Godliness, after they had strained at so many Gnats, to swallow such a Camel!

COULD they, in reality, have been held by any religious Ties, they would have paid some Regard, if not to the general Precepts of Obedience, if not to the former Oaths of Allegiance they had taken; yet at least to their own *Solemn League and Covenant*, that precious Test of Disloyalty, they so eagerly contended for, and which they had contrived as a Snare for others, whilst, through the Deadness of their Consciences, they were unrestrained themselves.

EVEN



EVEN *that Engagement*, rebellious as it SERM. was, provided for the Security of the XI. King's Person, which they were bound, by all that was Sacred, to protect and defend; and consequently the putting him to Death, besides all the other bad Circumstances, was an Act of the most *deliberate Perjury* that ever was committed.

BUT as if something was still wanting to fill up the Measure of their complicated Impiety; they added Hypocrisy to the rest, gave a religious Turn to their execrable Proceedings, and in the Depth of all this Mischief, pretended a Zeal for God's Glory, and to have nothing so much at Heart, as promoting the Purity of his Worship.

NOR was *Piety* the only false Pretence, they would make a show of *Justice* too: They would seem to do that by *Law*, which was an open Violation of all the Laws both of God and Man. To this End was erected a Mock-Tribunal of Self-created Judges, who by Virtue of that usurped and imaginary Authority, presumed to set before them as a Criminal, their unquestionably rightful Sovereign. They had

SERM. had false Witnessess, *Sons of Belial*, ready  
 XI. at Hand to have born their Testimony  
 against him, and to have charged him  
 with such Things, as he not only, in Fact,  
 was clear of, but which he was not ca-  
 pable of committing.

*Naboth* indeed might, though he did not, have \* *curst God and the King*. There were really such Offences, though there was no such Offender. Whereas in the Case of our martyred Prince, the Crime it self was as fictitious as the personal Charge. He not only was not, but could not be guilty of that Treason they accused him of, since by our known Constitution, it was against himself only that any Treason could be committed. We find in no Records the mention of such a Crime, as the *Lese-Majesty of the People*, nor that the cruellest Tyrants were ever taxed with being *Rebels* to their own Subjects. It is possible for them to misgovern, to subvert Fundamentals, to abuse their

\* So the *Hebrew* Verb should be rendred here, as it is elsewhere. The *Arabick* and *Chaldee* express it by two different Words : Thou didst *Blaspheme* God, and *Curse* the King.

Trust,

Trust, or to forsake it, and drive the Peo- SERM.  
ple to a Necessity of transferring their Al- XI.  
legiance (of which our own Times have  
furnished us with an Instance :) But they  
can never be guilty of *Treason*, nor suffer  
the Punishment of *Traytors*.

WHEN therefore the good King dis-  
owned this illegal Judicature, and refused  
(as he well might) to plead his Cause be-  
fore them ; they still went on with a Mask  
of Justice, and in Mock-Representation of  
a legal Proceſs, to Sentence and Condemn  
him, and Sign a bloody Warrant for his  
Execution.

ANOTHER Thing in which his Case  
does nearly resemble that of *Naboth* is,  
that they both were murdered for the  
same Cause, because they would not part  
with the *Inheritance of their Fathers*.

*Naboth* might have compounded for his  
*Life*, by relinquishing his *Vineyard*, nay  
he might have had an equivalent too. But  
as he conceived himself bound in Consci-  
ence, religiously to preserve his original Pa-  
trimony, he was under an unhappy Ne-  
cessity of making such a Refusal, as brought  
him to that untimely End.

AND

SERM. AND the Desire of his *Inheritance* was

IX. the Motive that induced our unnatural  
 Country-men, to take away the Life of  
 their lawful King. The inherent Rights  
 and Prerogatives of the Crown, which his  
 Royal Predecessors had uncontestably en-  
 joyed, through a Succession of many Ages,  
 were one after another disputed with *him*,  
 and in the End violently extorted. What  
 he could depart from, with Safety to his  
 Conscience and Honour, he gave them,  
 by a voluntary Consent, to preserve the  
 Quiet of his Kingdom ; but when he per-  
 ceived that nothing would content them ;  
 (their Demands still rising, as his Conces-  
 sions were larger) he adhered with a sted-  
 dy Resolution to those Branches of Power,  
 which he judged to be inseparable from  
 the Royal Dignity, and parted with them  
 and his Life together.

BEFORE they had thus compassed their  
 wicked Ends, and were become Masters  
 of all without Controul, whilst there was  
 yet the Appearance and Shadow of Kingly  
 Government, and nothing could be valid  
 without the Royal Sanction ; even then,  
 though they left him the *Name*, they ar-  
 rogated

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rogated to themselves the *Power*. With what repeated Importunities did they daily tear from him his most trusted and faithful Servants, under the Character of *Evil Counsellors*, and thrust into his Presence and Councils, their own mercenary Creatures, Men of notorious Faction and Disloyalty, the profest Haters both of his Person and Authority, as the only Men to be *confided* in! How justly might he have answered their haughty and unreasonable Demands (for such in Effect were their *humble Petitions*;) in the Words of the wisest of Princes (when a very improper Application was made to him, in Behalf of one, who had so little Pretension to *favour*, that *Impunity* was more than he had deserved) *Ask for him the Kingdom also.* 1 Kings ii. 22.

THEY wanted, in short, such a Power as should create Dependencies on *them*, and tie fast to their Service such Instruments of Mischief as they should have Occasion to make use of. And, not to descend to all the several Branches of Royalty, it was Dominion and Government they aimed at; an Affectation of Lording and Ruling it,

SERM.  
XI.

SERM. it, was the real Ground of their seditious

XI. Outcries (as the Event sufficiently show'd) however they varnished over their Designs with more plausible Pretences.

ONCE more, we may observe another Resemblance between these two innocent Persons, in that neither of them suffered *singly*, but the Enemies of each extended their Malice to the whole Race of them. Though the History now before us is silent as to *Naboth's Family*, and only relates what befel him in his own Person, yet we may learn from 2 *Kings*, ix. 26. what became of them. *Surely I have seen Yesterday the Blood of Naboth, and the Blood of his Sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite thee in this Plat.*

IT cannot, I confess, be equally affirmed, with relation to our martyr'd Sovereign, that the Blood of *his Sons* too calls for Vengeance, *that* only Stream of Royal Blood having been spilt, that ran within his own Veins. But though they escaped with Life, (no Thanks to the Usurpers of their Inheritance that they did so) yet were they divested of their just Rights, which none of them had then done any Thing  
to

to forfeit, driven into Exile, branded with SERM.  
 Names of Infamy and Reproach, and de- XI.  
 clared *Traytors* and *Rebels* themselves, as  
 well as their Abettors and Adherents.

HAVING said thus much by way of Parallel, give me Leave to conclude the Comparison between these two Innocents, as I first introduced it, with taking Notice of one material Difference between the two Histories. *Naboth's* Murderer, though *above* the Reach of *human* Justice, saw, and confessed, and bewailed his Guilt, and humbled himself so effectually before God, that the Vengeance he required for that *innocent Blood* (for *innocent Blood* will be avenged, nor is it any Security to us, that it was not shed by *us*, or in *our Days*) was not immediately taken, but postponed till another Generation.

BUT the *Royal Murderers* shew'd no Remorse. The *Regicides* of *this Day* continued to the last inflexible and obdurate: Their Hearts were so hardened by the just Judgment of God for their accumulated Wickedness, that even those of them, who by his peculiar Providence were reserved for *publick Justice*, were so far from any

Signs

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SERM. Signs of Repentance, that they even gloried in the inhuman Deed. I come now;  
XI. in the

*Second Place,* To consider the *Nature and Consequences* of the Fact committed on this Day. The *Nature* of it may be in a great Measure judged, from what has been already said. But farther to convince us of the enormous Guilt of it, let us take it as attended with the following Circumstances.

FOR a Sovereign and *Hereditary Monarch* (it was then an *Hereditary Monarchy* pure) after many other previous Outrages and Affronts, to be brought to the Bar, as a *common Malefactor*, and that before a pretended *High Court* composed of his own *Subjects*, surrounded with a Guard of his own *Soldiers*, to be arraigned of *Treason*, to be sentenced to *Death*, and executed on a *Scaffold*, in his *capital City*, and before the Walls of his own *Palace*: And all this to gratify the Ambition or Revenge of a few turbulent Spirits, whilst a far greater Number, who disapproved of that rigorous Extremity, could yet be contented



contented to stand by as unconcerned SERM;  
 Spectators, and suffer the bloody Tragedy XI.  
 to be acted, without offering to interpose;  
 or stirring to the Rescue of their Prince :  
 The Fact I say thus circumstantiated, is  
 not to be equalled in any History; by  
 which Majesty it self, as well as the Per-  
 son of the King, was so outrageously in-  
 sulted.

AND that all this should be done in a  
 Kingdom, *by the undoubted and fundamen-  
 tal Laws* whereof (I speak in the very  
 Words of a Law, made indeed since the  
 horrid Fact; but made, not to constitute,  
 but recognize this *essential Prerogative*, as  
 antecedently inherent in the Crown; that)  
 \* *neither the Peers of the Realm, nor the  
 Commons; nor both together, in Parliament;  
 nor out of Parliament, nor the People col-  
 lectively, nor representatively, nor any other  
 Persons whatsoever, ever had, have, or  
 ought to have, any coercive Power over the  
 Persons of the Kings of this Realm.*


AND if no such Authority was lodged  
 with the *whole Body* of Subjects, how

\* Stat. 12. Car. 2. Ch. 30. §. 7.

SERM. much less could it be claimed by that in-  
 XI. *considerable Remnant* of one House, which  
 without the Concurrence of the other, and whilst the far greater Part of its own Members were kept out by Force of Arms, had the Confidence to usurp the venerable Name of *Parliament!*

Never was that *happy Part* of our *Constitution*, that *Necessary Fence* against *Arbitrary Rule*, and *Bulwark* of *English Laws* and *Liberties*, so reproachfully perverted. Never were the People of *England* so untruly said to be represented: Which they no more were, by the corrupt Refuse of that Assembly, than the *Catholick Church* was fairly represented in the pretended *Council of Trent*, where only those could be admitted, who were the known Favourers of the *Pope's Supremacy*, and who would be sure to do his Work effectually.

BUT let us suppose they had a Power over his Person, and withal that he had misemployed his Regal Administration as much as some have represented him to have done; let us take all for Truth that inveterate Malice, or factious Prejudice has endeavoured to fasten

on him; even these Provocations were SERM.  
 far from sufficient to justify so extra- XI.  
 vagant a Remedy as the shedding of his   
 Blood.

MUCH less when they lived under so mild a Government, and a Prince so tender of the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects as he naturally was in his own Temper.

I PRETEND not to deny that, even in *his* Reign, there were some just Causes of Complaint, some real Grievances, some unwarrantable Impositions and unjustifiable Demands. Princes are but Men, and fallible like other Men; nor is it any great Wonder if the best of them Mistake the Extent of their Prerogative, when persuaded into an undue Opinion of it, by those that should advise them better.

BUT how easily might those Grievances have been set right in Time, had not the rough and undutiful Manner in which the Redress of them was sought, made him believe for a time there were none that needed it. But when once he was convinced of their Reality, how willingly did he redress them all, and more than all,

SERM. that could with any Show of Justice be  
 XI. complained of, or be thought to deserve  
 the Name of Hardships! How often might  
 Things have been brought to a better  
 Temper, and the unhappy Breach accom-  
 modated, had not their own Obstnacy  
 prevented it, whom no Degree of Royal  
 Condescension would satisfy or appease;  
 but his Blood they *would have*, and his  
 Blood they *had*: The Guilt whereof has  
 ever since lain heavy on this sinful Nation,  
 and even now calls for our deepest Humi-  
 liation, to deprecate that Vengeance of  
 Almighty God, which might justly be  
 inflicted on the *remote Posterity* of the  
 Actors in that *unnatural Parricide*.

HE has abundantly testified his Displea-  
 sure at it, by many bad and mischievous  
*Consequences* it has produced, some of  
 which we still smart under, though not  
 the first I am going to mention, which is

THE Confusion of those Times that  
 immediately ensued. The miserable State  
 of *Anarchy* to which this unhappy Coun-  
 try was reduced, after the Extirpation of  
 the *Royal Family*, may be a Warning to  
 all querulous Innovators, who are never

contented with the present State of Things. SERM.  
 They compassed their Wish at last, and XI.  
 had the Satisfaction of seeing both *Kingly*  
*and Episcopal Government* at once abolish-  
 ed, and themselves (as they supposed) in a  
 State of *religious and civil Liberty*.

BUT did they enjoy that *Liberty* any  
 otherwise than in Name? Did it not cost  
 them much dearer to maintain their *new*  
*Lords* in their ill-gotten *Tyranny*, than  
 ever it had done to supply the Exigencies  
 of their *lawful Prince*? Was the Freedom  
 of *Parliament*, and Right of *Elections* more  
 inviolably kept? Were they less under the  
 Terror of an *armed Force*? Were there  
 fewer *Executions*, *Fines* and *Imprisonments*?  
 Was the Course of the *Law* more free and  
 undisturbed, or *Justice* more equitably and  
 impartially administered? Were the *Taxes*  
 more moderate, the *Loans* of Money less  
 constrained, or the *Publick Faith* (when  
 no Body knew what or where the *Publick*  
 was) a better Security for what was lent,  
 than before this violent Convulsion of the  
 State?

No. The Reverse of all this is notori-  
 ously true, if there be any Truth in His-

SERM. tory. They dreamed and raved of Oppression before, but they were then oppressed in Earnest. They were before chastised with imaginary Whips, but then with real Scorpions. And surely it was a just Judgment of God upon them for their inconstancy of Temper, and eagerness for a Change, that when once they had shaken off their just Allegiance, and chose new Masters for themselves, they were afterwards forced to be perpetually changing, and could find no Power that was able to protect them long, but saw more Turns and Revolutions in the Compass of a few Months, than had happened in a Thousand Years before.

NEW Schemes and Models of Government were daily fashioned, some of which died in *Embryo*, others made a Blaze for a short Time, but no sooner had they turned themselves to the new-started Light, in hopes to be warmed and directed by it, but the airy Meteor disappeared.

IT was a common Thing then to see Servants on Horseback, whilst Princes walked on Foot, to see the meanest of the People in the highest Places; and one  
might

might have seen *Jotham's Parable* exactly SERM. verified, when instead of the *Fatness of the Olive*, and the *Fruitfulness of the Vine*; XI. the supreme Dominion was invested in the despicable, the useless, the hurtful *Brambles*.

THEN as to *Spirituals*. Did the *Authors* of those Troubles find their Account in them? Were they able at last quietly to establish their own Way of Worship, and had they not many contending Rivals? Were not their own Complaints against the Hierarchy, of *taking too much upon them, imposing on the Lord's People*, and depriving them of their *Christian Liberty*, returned upon themselves? Was there a greater Advancement of Piety, whilst the *Sacrament* was rarely administered, the Catechizing of Youth exceedingly neglected, and almost all Religion resolved into *Hearing*? Was there a greater *Liberty of Conscience*, when the prevailing Sect for the Time condemned the *Toleration* of the rest as *Antichristian*?

————— *En quo Discordia Civis  
Perduxit miseros!*

SERM. THESE were the *blessed* Fruits of  
 XI. *Discord and Rebellion.* This was the  
 ~~~~~ Price of over-turning a legally and peace-  
 ably settled Constitution.

As another bad Effect (but God be praised that is over too) of this Day's Cru-
 elty, may be reckoned the imminent Dan-
 ger we were in, not many Years since, of
 the Return of *Popish Superstition* into this
 Nation, to which, in all human Probabi-
 lity, the greatest Part of it had in a little
 Time relapsed, had not Providence de-
 feated the Designs that were formed against
 our Religion, by the late *happy Revolution.*

THAT very Danger, I say, of *Popery*,
 may be imputed, in its Original, to those,
 who by banishing the *Royal Progeny*, and
 obliging them to fly for Shelter to the
 Court of a *Popish Prince*, exposed them
 to the utmost Temptation of changing
 the Religion of the Country they had left,
 for that of the Place where they were en-
 tertained. It did in Fact so happen, that
 they were earnestly solicited to that Ef-
 fect, and one of them, we know, (and
 we had like to have known it at too dear

a Rate) unhappily complied with the SERM.
Temptation. XI.


BUT there are some ill Consequences of that great Rebellion that still affect us, and particularly the unhappy Divisions that reign among us. It is a sad and deplorable Thing indeed, that Men who are Professors of the same Religion, who have the same political Obligations, who are bound by all the Ties both of Interest and Duty, to direct their Designs and Actions to the same End, should notwithstanding fly into such opposite Extremes, and brand each other with such opprobrious Names.

SUCH Jealousies and Surmises, such *Names of Distinction*, and forming of *Parties*, were the fatal Beginnings of that *Intestine War*, which depopulated and laid waste this flourishing Kingdom, and ended in the *Murder* of the *Sovereign*, and the total Overthrow of all orderly Government both in Church and State. And that Spirit of Division which then began to reign, has never since been totally ejected.

SERM. ADD to this, that many loose Principles as to *Government*, were then imbibed, of which it were much to be wished, there were no Tincture still remaining.

AND (which is worst of all) it is too certain, that the Pretences to a more than ordinary Sanctity, and the great Appearance of Godliness in such Numbers of Men, who yet, when the Mask was off, were found to be wicked to the last Degree, and to have acted by no Principles but *Interest* and *Ambition*; gave an unhappy Disgust to many Observers of their Conduct, against all that favoured of Piety and Godliness, and raised an unjust Suspicion in them, that all Religion was counterfeit, that whoever went under the Character of a *devout Person*, was only acting a Part, in order to deceive. Thus were the Seeds of *Atheism* and *Irreligion* sown, which have since thriven but too well, and yielded a very ungracious Increase.

To the same Cause too we may ascribe almost all our Differences in Religion. We can call upon all the Persuasions but one, who enjoy the Benefit of the *Toleration*, (and may it ever be enjoyed by Consciences


sciences truly tender) to look back to SERM.
 those unhappy Times for their first Ori- XI.
 ginal, and see, in the Midst of how much 
 Licentiousness and Disorder they were pro-
 pagated and began to spread.

I shall only crave your farther Patience, while I apply what has been said in two short moral Reflections, both which I shall take from the concluding Prayer in the Service for the Day, where we beseech God, *that neither the Splendor of any thing that is great, nor the Conceit of any thing that is good in us, may any ways withdraw our Eyes from looking on ourselves as sinful Dust and Ashes.*

I. THEN, from the tragical Event of this Day, we may observe the *Uncertainty* of all *human State and Grandeur*. Of how short Continuance, and consequently of how little Value is the most glittering Pomp, that attracts our vain Eyes, and strikes us with Admiration! Of how slippery a Tenure must *lesser Dignities and Honours* be, if *Majesty* it self be so insecure! How little is the Condition of Princes to be envied, who have often Occasion to envy the *Quiet and Repose* of the meanest

SERM. est of their Subjects, who can sleep securely, whilst *they* are waking and caring for them! They are equally exposed to Pain and Sicknefs, to Infirmitie and Diseases; they lye as open to a natural, and much *more* open to a violent Death. *Plots and Conspiracies, Assassinations and Poysonings* are Accidents peculiar to the *Royal List* of Mortality, and seldom bring a Subject to his End,

NOR is the *Fame* of Princes less liable to Injury, than their *Persons*. Calumny dares even assault the *Throne*, and fears not to trample on *Regal Sepulchers*. There is none so great and inaccessible, as to be out of the Reach of that intruding Monster; who will blacken and sully the clearest Fame, turn the brightest Ornaments and Beauties into Deformities, detract from the most heroical and princely Virtues, and transform, to the Appearance of such as see by her Glass, a good *Josiah* into a wicked *Jeroboam*. And as the most conspicuous *Greatness* is no Preservative against the common Calamities of the World, so neither

2. Is the most eminent *Goodness*. Try-SERM.
 als and Afflictions are the common Lot of XI.
 Mortality, and every Man, more or less, 
 must sustain his Share of them. In this,
 the Righteous and Wicked fare alike, nor
 can a Man judge of Love or Hatred by all
 that is before him.

THERE are indeed many Passages of
 Scripture, that encourage a good Man to
 expect even the Blessings of this Life, and
 ordinarily speaking, he does actually enjoy
 them, at least in a contented Mind and
 quiet Conscience, which comprehends them
 all. But we are to look upon these Pas-
 sages, as moral Observations, not as abso-
 lute Promises: That according to the most
 rational, most probable, most natural E-
 vent, such temporal Blessings would be
 allotted to good Men, not that each par-
 ticular good Man should be possessed of
 every one of them, for that would be in
 some Measure, to have his Portion here.

ALL this is beside our Contract with
 God. The Reward there stipulated, is
 the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and if he does
 think fit to *add these Things unto us*, and
 to enlarge our Portion, by the Accession of
 some

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SERM. some external good Things, it is over and
XI. above our covenanted Recompence.

~ BUT whatever the Lot may be of a righteous Man here on *Earth*, he will be sure of his Reward in a *better Place*, in those Regions of endless Bliss and Glory, where the *blessed Martyr*, whom we this Day Commemorate, we may charitably presume, is now adorned with that *Crown of Life*, which he purchased by his constant *Perseverance unto Death*.



SERMON XII.



SERMON XII.

A Sermon on the General Fast,
before the *House of Commons*,
March 28, 1711.



AMOS iv. 10.

— your young Men have I slain
with the Sword; and have taken
away your Horses, and I have
made the Stink of your Camps
to come up unto your Nostrils :
Yet have ye not returned unto
me, saith the Lord.



HE Almighty, as the great Go-
vernour of the World, and Dis-
poser of Events, has various
Methods of keeping Mankind
in subjection to him, and making them
sensible

SERM.
XII.

SERM. sensible of his Power and Dominion over
 XII. them. He has very gentle and very severe Dispensations; with which he visits them by turns; and though he is much more delighted, when he can govern by the former, yet he sometimes finds it necessary to have recourse to the latter: Nor does it always happen; that even his heaviest Judgments are sufficient for the Reformation of wicked Men: As we find him complaining several Times in this Chapter of my Text; where he enumerates the various Judgments he had successively sent down on the House of *Israel*, and all without effect. *I have given you, says he, Cleanness of Teeth in all your Cities, and want of Bread in all your Places — I have withholden the Rain from you, so that two or three Cities wandered unto one City to drink Water — I have smitten you with Blasting and Mildew, when your Gardens, and your Vineyards, and your Fig-Trees and your Olive-Trees increased, the Palmer Worm devoured them — I have sent among you the Pestilence, after the Manner of Egypt, your young Men have I slain with the Sword, &c.* But all these Severities;

rities, it seems, were too little to reclaim SERM. them; for we still have it repeated, after XII. the Relation of every Judgment; *yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*

AND I wish this were not too much the Case of our own Country. We too have had Experience of many of God's dreadful Visitations, though far less than our Iniquities deserved; and with a large Allay of unmerited Blessings; *yet have we not returned unto the Lord*, nor are we made the better by all our Sufferings. The several national Calamities mentioned in this Chapter; with which the great Sovereign of the Universe chastises an ungodly People; have all had their Turns of raging in this Land: But that which now lies heaviest on us, and the farther Calamities whereof we are now met to deprecate, by the solemn Humiliation of our selves before God, and the religious Exercises of this Day, is the Misery of a devouring War; which however unavoidably entred into, and successfully carried on, has been unexpectedly long and tedious, bloody and expensive; in which some Millions of Lives have been sacrificed,

SERM. and many Millions of Treasure been consumed, and all without producing the expected Fruit of so much Hazard and Contention, *viz.* a joyful Rest and Tranquillity, the Security of our Religion, and the undisturbed Possession of our civil Rights and Liberties.

BUT that we may improve the Sense of our publick Sufferings, and of the Transgressions for which we suffer, to the Design of this Day's penitential Submission; that we may humble our selves under the afflicting Hand of God: That we may confess all this to be the *Lord's doing*; and be alarmed with the just Apprehensions of what he will farther do, if we continue to provoke him: That the Almighty may not complain of us, as formerly of the *Jews*, that though he has *slain our young Men with the Sword*, and permitted other Evils to befall us, *yet would we not return unto him*; give me leave, from the Words of the Text, and Occasion of the Day, to insist on the following Points.

First, THAT the *Sword* is an Instrument of God's Vengeance; and that
all

all Wars and Fightings are a Judgment sent from him, to chastise the Iniquity of both the contending Parties. SERM.
XII.

Secondly, THAT to remain incorrigible under God's Judgments, is the highest Degree of Provocation, and the certain Way to inevitable Destruction. And,

Thirdly, How far in Fact we have, and in what Manner we ought to *return unto the Lord our God*; that so we may appease his Wrath, avert his Judgments, and recommend ourselves to his Favour and Protection:

First, That the *Sword* is an Instrument of God's Vengeance; and that all Wars and Fightings are a Judgment sent from him, to chastise the Iniquity of both the contending Parties.

To confirm which Assertion, and make you sensible, that War is both an Evil, and an Evil of God's sending, I might appeal

SERM. to a Multitude of Texts, where he threatens it in his Anger, and joins it with other Plagues, the most dreadful that can befall a Nation, where he assumes to himself the Title of *Lord of Hosts*, and even glories in the Appellation of *Shaddai*, or the Destroyer, *I kill*, says he, *and I make alive, I wound and I heal*, Deut. xxxii. 39. And a little after, *If I whet my glittering Sword, and my Hand take hold on Judgment, I will render Vengeance to mine Enemies, and will reward them that hate me.* We read in the xivth of *Ezekiel*, that *the Sword* is one of those which he calls his *four sore Judgments* : It was one Branch of the miserable Option proposed to *David*, when he was to be punished for numbering the People ; and we find he did not think it the least of the three Evils, but made Choice of the Pestilence it self, as a less formidable Ill.

WILL it here be alledged, that to *flee three Months before our Enemies, whilst they pursue us*, which was to have been *David's* Case ; or more generally, that to be crossed with continual Disappointments, to miscarry in all our warlike Enterprizes, and

and fall at last under the Power of a pre-
vailing Adversary, might indeed be ac-
counted a heavy Judgment: But that a
prosperous and successful War, such as this
we are engaged in, attended with repeat-
ed Victories, and blessed with many provi-
dential Events, may better afford Matter
of Joy and Triumph, than of Humiliation
and Repentance, and fill us with the As-
surance, that God is pleased with the Jus-
tice of our Cause, and that we are
the People whom he delights to ho-
nour?

SERM.
XII.

IF this should be objected in Bar to the
solemn Devotions, the religious Austeri-
ties, the affectionate Contrition, the smi-
ting Reflections on our own Unworthiness,
and the Justness of God's Displeasure,
which this Day of Penance and Mortifi-
cation calls for; may I not be allowed (in
order to promote these Holy Duties, and
for the subduing in ourselves that Pride
and Elation of Mind, which might other-
wise obstruct them) to turn the dark Side
of our Affairs, and represent a more uncom-
fortable Prospect; without being thought
to undervalue the Goodness of our divine

SERM. Benefactor, or insensible of those accumulated Favours, which in the Riches of his Mercy he has showered down upon us? For which may his glorious Name be ever magnified and exalted.

FOR still it must be remembred, that however the continued Succession of so many Blessings and Deliverances may administer just Grounds of Wonder and Delight, of Love and Gratitude, of Hope and Trust; it gives us none of Confidence and Presumption. How well soever the Almighty may be affected to a righteous Cause, he will be no Friend to the unrighteous Espousers of it. Whatever past Advantages we have gained, they are so far only an Earnest and Pledge of farther Mercies, as they are thankfully received, and usefully improved; but our Exaltation will only contribute to our heavier Fall, if we grow giddy with our Height, and look not to the Arm that raised us. We have put on our Armour with good Success, but it is not yet Time to put it off: The incidental Scenes of the Tragedy of War have been generally in our Favour, but who can judge what the Catastrophe will be?

The

The main Issue of it is still precarious and depending, beyond the Reach of our Forefight to discover, or our Power to determine. God only can give Success or Disappointment to our Counsels and Arms: He only knows how the great contested Point will be finally decided; whether *Europe* shall be free, or subjected to the arbitrary Will of one aspiring Monarch; whether the true Religion, or Popish Superstition shall be established in these Realms.

In the mean time, is not our very Uncertainty, in a Matter of so much Consequence, our Fears of a Miscarriage, our Reflections on the Instability of worldly Blessings, our Apprehensions that the Course of Success may possibly turn against us, and the Triumphs of so many Years be blasted by the Event of one unprosperous Day? Is not even this, I say, enough to convince us, that War is a heavy Judgment? That even a victorious and successful War carries some Marks of the Divine Displeasure, has its Share of Punishment and Suffering, and is a just Occasion of humbling ourselves in the most lowly and

SERM. reverent Manner before Almighty God ;
 XII. of flying to him for Pardon and Protec-
 tion, under the modestest Sense of our
 Weakness, and deepest Conviction of our
 Guilt.

BUT if to the Uneasiness of such an anxious and doubtful State, we add the unavoidable Calamities with which all War is necessarily attended ; if we reflect on the Confusion and Disorder, the Waste and Desolation, the Injustice, Cruelty and Oppression, the undistinguished Violence to innocent Friends and nocent Foes, during the Heat and Hurry of a Battle or a Pursuit, with many other affrightning Circumstances that might be named ; this must farther convince us, how far such a State is from being at any Time eligible, how unlovely and uninviting under its most promising and favourable Aspect ; and what a Pain it must be to a Breast that has any generous Sense of Pity, even to conquer at the Expence of so much Misery of his Fellow-Creatures.

I FORBEAR to aggravate this black and dismal Scene, by representing the Cruelties in cold Blood, with other licentious
 Outrages

Outrages and Excesses, committed not only without, but against Command, by those *Sons of Violence*, whom no Rule or Order can restrain. I am speaking only of a regular Oppression, and disciplined Barbarity, such as is warranted by the Law of Arms, and is, I confess, in some Degree necessary toward the successful Prosecution of a War: But may we not therefore infer from that very unhappy Necessity, which obliges us to be the Instruments of so much Mischief, that War, in its best and most wished for Event, is still a very dreadful Judgment? To which, by the Way, 'tis a very poor Alleviation, to reflect that our Enemies have suffered much more than we.

BUT let us take now another View, and turn from the Evils we make others bear, to those we endure our selves. Is it not enough to damp our Pride, and make us ashamed of our confident Boasting, when we consider at how dear a Rate the Subject of our Boasting has been purchased? How our young Men have been slain with the Sword, for which there are too many *Widows to make Lamentation* ;
how

SERM. how many have been made fatherless, and
 XII. how many childless ; how our Poor have
 increased, our Commerce decayed ; how
 largely we have been drained of our Riches,
 and which is much more precious, of our
 Blood, in the Course of this expensive and
 destructive War.

CONSIDER what a Value is set by the
 Laws of this Land, as well as by the Laws
 of God, on every single Life ; how strict
 an Inquisition is made for the Blood of the
 meanest Subject, when spilt even by the
 greatest ; with how unanimous a Voice,
 and warm an Indignation, Justice is de-
 manded against any Murtherer ? And yet
 how many of these valuable Lives are sa-
 crificed in every Battle, or without a Bat-
 tle, by the Fatigues and Casualties of an
 Expedition or Campaign ; and that Con-
 sideration will be a farther Proof, that we
 have all this Time been under God's visit-
 ing and afflicting Hand, even while we
 have been conquering.

IT is by his Blessing indeed that we
 prevail in the Contention with our Ene-
 mies ; but it is his Anger that leaves us
 any Enemies to contend with. We must
 ascribe

ascribe it to his Favour and Loving-kindness, that our Right has been hitherto so happily vindicated and asserted ; but to his fatherly Correction and Reproof, that our Right is still disputed, and that we have Occasion to vindicate it by Force of Arms.

WE are, in short, but the Instruments of his Wrath, in all our Strife and Contention, and do but serve his Purposes on one another. He suffers Kingdoms to waste and weaken each other, that so he may avenge himself upon both, in Proportion to their several Provocations ; which is the Substance of my first Assertion. I am now to shew, in the

Second Place, THAT to remain incorrigible under God's Judgments, is the highest Degree of Provocation, and the certain Way to inevitable Ruin.

THERE is, indeed, no greater Sign of a confirmed Wickedness, and perfect Obduration, than to be insensible under the Rod of Affliction ; not to be improved or bettered by such awakening Admonitions, to be

be

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SERM. be so far from *turning to him that smiteth*
 XII. *us, Isa. ix. 13. as, on the contrary, to*
 spurn at the Arm that lashes us, and defy his Power while we smart under it.

LET us hear how he resents such a careless and stubborn Behaviour, *Isa. xxii. 12, 13, 14. And in that Day, says the Prophet (it was a Day when the Persians, by the Divine Permission, had invaded Judea, as he often suffered the barbarous Nations to do, in order to chastise his People for their Idolatry, and oblige them to cry out to him for Deliverance) in that Day did the Lord God of Hosts call to Weeping and to Mourning, and to Baldness, and to girding with Sackcloth. And behold Joy and Gladness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. And it was revealed in mine Ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.*

WHEN Men have the Confidence to despise and trifle with God's monitory Correction, instead of profiting by such salutary Discipline, they must be lost and
 dead

dead to all Goodness, and have no Spark of S E R M.
Divine Life remaining in them. XII.

WE see in Lethargick and Paralytick Fits, when all the vital Functions are at a Stand, that oftentimes the Patient is recovered by rougher Methods, and Operations seemingly cruel, when tender and gentle ones would have had no Effect. But when the violent Remedies too have been applied in vain, when the senseless Trunk, though flashed and scarified, scorched and blistered, exerts not the least imperfect Act of Life; it is then given over as lost and hopeless, and we conclude, when once it can feel no Pain, that it is past all other Feeling.


Now this is the Case of the Soul as well as Body, for even that has its *Lethargies* too. It is sometimes so buried in Sense, so immersed and plunged in Sottishness and Brutality, that all its Faculties are suspended, it becomes quite stupid and void of Reflection, and scarce appears to be an active Principle. While the Soul is thus dormant and secure (as it often is in a fortunate and flourishing Condition) it seems good to the All-wise Providence
to

SERM. to rouse and quicken it by some sharp

XII. Affliction. And if a Man is Proof against

this severer Lesson, if he is deaf, not only to the still Voice of God, but also to the louder and more audible Proclamations of his Will, if Misery cannot humble, nor Correction tame him; his *Conscience* thenceforward is, as the Apostle speaks, *seared with a hot Iron*, it becomes so dead and insensible, that no good Impression can be made on it. No Exhortations, no Rebukes, no Threats, no Promises, can excite, or shame, or allure, or terrify a Mind so steeled, a Heart so unrelenting. Such was the State of those whom the Prophet *Jeremy* complains of. *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive Correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return,* Jer. v. 3.

BUT of this we may be assured, that such as will not be amended by God's fatherly Correction, he will afterwards correct more sharply in his Anger; and however resolute and manly some may think it is to out-brave their Sufferings, and dare the Divine Vengeance;

Vengeance, it is far wiser and better to SERM.
relent in the Beginning, without tempting XII.
him too far, or abiding the Extremity of 
his Wrath.

IF indeed there were nothing more in God's Punishment, than standing the Shock of it for a few Moments, or a short limited Time, and one were sure to hear of it no more: If a Man could have any Security, that as soon as he had weathered out one Storm, he should for the future be Proof against all Adversity, and that Almighty Vengeance could not reach him; in this Case, a daring and inflexible Temper would not be quite so unaccountable. Had the Almighty no more Curses in Store, than the Patriarch had Blessings, who when one had been stolen from him, was not Master of a second, or none at least that was equal to the first, it might be some Encouragement to wicked Men to trifle with his Fury, when they perceived that he was once disarmed, and had already discharged his single Bolt. But the Artillery of Heaven is never to be exhausted. Though his Judgments are gone forth, and his Hand is heavy in another Place,

Place,

SERM. Place, he is not less at Leisure to regard
 XII. our Actions here, nor less able to chastise
 us for them. He can smite us in the
 midst of our Security, when we think of
 no farther Danger; and, with *Agag*, are
 saying within our selves: *Surely the Bit-*
terness of Death is past.

How much wiser is it then to prevent
 the Evil by an early Virtue, than to buy
 our Experience at so dear a Price? How
 much more rational to fly betimes from
 these Courses; which, when once we be-
 gin to smart soundly for them, we shall
 wish we had never taken? Or if we are
 tempted, by a foolish Curiosity, to try
 whether God will punish us or no; yet at
 least, methinks a small Portion of Misery
 might be sufficient to convince us that he
 is in earnest, without provoking him to
 the uttermost.

THERE is nothing more absurd and ri-
 diculous, than one of a haughty and re-
 fractory Spirit, contending with a superior
 Strength. It is worth one's observing,
 how long he will refuse to submit, after
 he is visibly worsted, how long he will
 hide his Pain, dissemble his Losses, and

to what a Degree he will suffer, before he will own he feels: And, after all, how he is forced to comply on the same or worse Conditions than he might have had before; whilst a long Resistance makes the Shame of a late Submission the more remarkable, and adds to the Glory of the Conqueror.

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HAD it not been much happier for *Pharaoh*, if after he had essayed two or three of God's Judgments, he had fulfilled his Command; and let *Israel* go; rather than have brought on himself and Country ten dreadful Plagues, and in the End the Loss of all their First-born; and, after all, be forced to permit that which he had so obstinately refused; and not only to permit their Departure, but even court those to be gone, whom he had before detained by Violence.

IF the Prodigal Son had managed after the same Rate, when his extravagant Folly had brought him to a very unhappy Condition; when he was reduced so low, as to envy not only his Father's Servants their Bread, but the very Swine their Husks: If after his Fortune was exhausted, his

SERM. high Spirit had remained, he might have
 XII. ended his Days in Shame and Beggary, in
 a foreign Country, unpitied, unrelieved.


BUT he had the Grace, you know, to make a better Use of his Sufferings; for though his Submission too was of the latest, yet it was not too late to be effectual. He wisely saw, that a haughty Stomach and Stiffness in the Wrong, was by no Means consistent with a famishing Condition; and that the seeming Shame of acknowledging his Offences, and returning to his Duty, was abundantly preferable to the Pain of Starving. And you see the happy Consequence of his Recantation; how by humbling himself he became exalted, how by confessing his Unworthiness he was accounted the more worthy, and whilst he was contented to be admitted as a Servant, was received with Joy as a Favourite Son. And this naturally leads me to the

Third Thing proposed; which was, To consider, how far, in Fact, we have, and in what Manner we ought to return unto the Lord our God, that so we

we may appease his Wrath, avert his SERM.
Judgments, and recommend ourselves XII.
to his Favour and Protection. 

AND here I shall not need to prove, that we have all, without Exception, gone astray from the Rules of Holy Living, prescribed us by our heavenly Lord and Father; and are no more worthy to be called his Sons or Servants, till we return to our Duty and Allegiance again. I leave it to every Man's Conscience to reflect, how far he, for his own Part, has deviated from the Laws of God, at what Distance he stands from him, and to make his Approaches to him again by such regular and wary Steps, as the Discipline of true Repentance calls for; with a contrite Heart and humble Spirit, covered with Shame and Confusion, and melted with Godly Sorrow; with an earnest Desire of Pardon and Reconciliation, with an undissembled Confession of his sinful Frailties, with holy Vows and solemn *Resolutions of Amendment*, with an affectionate Love of God, and universal Charity toward his Neighbour;

SERM. I SHALL not enlarge on the Corruption
XII. of the Times, and reigning Vices of the
Age; nor draw an uncomfortable and disgraceful Parallel between the *nominal Christians* in these, and the *real* ones in the primitive Days. It would be an Undertaking of too large a Compass for the Remainder of this Discourse, to describe in such Colours as they deserve, the shameful Riot and Debauchery, the Decay of our Piety and Improvement of our Luxury, the Abuse of God's Mercies, and Contempt of his Ordinances, and the Swarms of Heresies and pestilential Errors, that have infested this Nation for some past Years with an uncontrouled Licentiousness. But there is the less Need of my enlarging on this Head, since all Endeavours of this Kind are happily superseded by the religious Care and godly Zeal of our most *gracious Sovereign*, who has recommended the Enquiry into the Growth of these Errors, and the Causes of it, to the *Clergy in Convocation assembled*; and we may reasonably promise ourselves, from the good Disposition of all Parts of the *Ligislature*, that when once the Cause is fully laid open,

open, this growing and contagious Evil SERM.
will not be long without a proper Re- XII.
medy. 

I have but just hinted at these Corruptions in Faith and Practice, as fit to be reformed, and without the Reformation of which we must hope for no Blessing on our Endeavours, nor that any Thing we take in Hand will prosper ; but as they are Subjects of Discourse never out of Season, and very frequently and copiously insisted on, I have forborn to expatiate on them.

AND I the rather chuse to contract my self as to these Points, because there is one ill Quality not so watchfully observed, more rarely condemned, less heartily detested, and which has so peculiar a Relation to the Business of War, that I cannot but think it a proper Matter for the Humiliation of this Day ; and that is, the Want of a *publick Spirit*, and *disinterested Love* of our Country. Had such a *Spirit* prevailed among us, had we all been as zealously concerned for the common Welfare, as for our particular Interests and Advantages, how much more effectually might we have prosecuted our just Rights, how

SERM. much sooner had the bloody Tragedy been
 XII. ended, and a joyful Peace and Tranquility been restored? Had we strove with a generous Contention, who should be most active and forward in the Service of his Country, who should contribute most largely to its Preservation and Support, and bear the greatest Share of the common Burden, instead of artful Management and shifting Contrivance to bear either none at all, or as little as was possible; if, I say, we had taken this Course, we might have gloried in the Name of *Patriots* indeed, we might, in all human Probability, have long since enjoyed the Fruits of our hearty and vigorous Endeavours, in a Freedom from any farther Hazard or Expence, and our very Liberality itself might have proved the truest Parsimony.

BUT has there not, in this Respect, been a Defect of Justice, as well as Generosity? Has not the Publick been shamefully defrauded by with-holding legal Dues, and grasping at illegal Profits? Are not such Frauds and Depredations too commonly extenuated, and represented as no Injury to any one, as if that Government could
 have

have no Property of its own, to which we SERM.
all owe the *Security* of ours? XII.

BUT whatever has been practised of this Kind, we have Reason to hope, that the wise Determinations of this *Honourable House*, which has taken such effectual Care that the Publick shall both do Justice and receive it; will produce for the Time to come, if not a better *Spirit* among us, a freer from *Self-Interest* and *Guile*, and the little Arts of Cunning and Deceit; yet at least a Forbearance of all notorious Fraud and exorbitant Injustice, and give a Check to that greedy and rapacious Humour which makes Men delight in the Miseries of their Country, if they can but find their own private Account in the Calamities it endures, and raise themselves upon its Ruins.

BUT as we hope for God's Blessing on our publick or private Undertakings, let us purge ourselves from these and all other Iniquities, and let them no longer be named among us; let our *Love be without Dissimulation* to God, our Neighbour and our Country; let us reflect on the Mercies we have received with Thankfulness, and on the Judgments we have felt, with Humi-

SERM. lity and Submission ; and let both together encline us ardently to love, and reverently to fear him, who is the Author of all the Good, and Permitter of all the Ill that happens to us.

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ABOVE all things, let us beware of a stubborn and contumacious *Spirit*, and such an unsubdued Obstinacy, as is the very Temper of the Devils, who still audaciously resist their Maker, though they know all Resistance to be in vain ; whilst they are gnashing and howling they are still in Rebellion, they re-iterate their Crimes in the midst of their Torture, and whilst they roar for blaspheming, they roar out new Blasphemies.


BUT oh ! may none of us ever act or suffer like them ; let the Judgments and Calamities which God in his great Wisdom is pleased to allot us, (and in that Number let us reckon the Fury of a wasting War) work their intended Operation on us, by driving us to sincere Repentance, obliging us to purify our Consciences from dead Works to serve the living God. This it concerns us to do, both in point of Interest and Duty, as private Christians ; But there

there is a farther Consideration that ought to affect us, as we are Members of a Body Politick, if we have any of that publick Spirit, or Love for the Community we belong to, which I was just now recommending ; to which we can do no better or more substantial Service, than by helping to reform it, by using our best Endeavours, that no *accursed Thing* may be found among us, that no prevailing Vices or scandalous Immoralities, may disgrace the Purity of our Profession : That Piety, Truth and Justice, may be the distinguishing Characters of our People ; that God's *Service* may be our Delight, and his Glory our greatest Aim.

AND in Order to so good and desirable a Work, as the reforming Mens Manners, and promoting God's Worship, I cannot but adore his Goodness, that has inspired our *Gracious Queen* and *her Parliament* at this Time with so noble and religious a Thought, as the causing to be erected in these Cities a sufficient Number of Places of Divine Worship, the Want of which has so long retarded the Progress of *true Reformation*, and been so manifest a Hindrance

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SERM. drance to *Religion* in general, and the  
 XII. *Church of England* in particular.


 BUT how must it encrease our Wonder and our Joy, when we reflect, that so large and comprehensive a Design should be formed at so unlikely a Juncture, and yet meet with so general Encouragement, that these Churches, like the Walls and second Temple of *Jerusalem*, should be *built even in troublous Times*, Dan. ix. 25. when the extraordinary Exigencies of the Government, and the large Supplies required for the publick Service, would have given a much fairer Pretence for Opposition, than on other Occasions has been admitted. It has been no uncommon Stratagem, in those who were secretly Ill-wishers to any good Design which they durst not openly condemn, to lose it by Delay, and artfully contrive that no Time might be found for the Execution of it, by always objecting the Unseasonableness of the Time present; which treacherous Reasoning, has been the Ruin of many an honest and well-concerted Project. But this happy Instance will convince us, that no Time is unseasonable or improper for  
 doing

doing Good ; and that where there is an SERM.  
earnest Disposition, there will soon be a XII.  
working according to that Disposition. A  
willing Mind and hearty Resolution, far  
from being staggered at little Obstacles and  
Impediments, will make its way through  
great ones. May the Author of all good  
Counsels give his Blessing to this, and di-  
rect it to the Advancement of his Glory,  
and the Propagation of his Religion : May  
he give us all the Grace of true Repen-  
tance, and fit us for the Inheritance of his  
heavenly Kingdom : May he continue to  
blefs Her Majesty's Arms with Victory  
and Success, preserve Her Sacred Person  
from secret Attempts and open Violence ;  
and in his own good Time, may he *cause  
War to cease in all the World, and bring  
Destructions to a perpetual End.*

*To him, with the Son and Holy Ghost,  
&c.*



# S E R M O N XIII.

Anniversary Sermon for the Charity  
Schools at St. Sepulchres, May  
24, 1711.



MATTH. xi. 25.

*At that Time Jesus answered and  
said, I thank thee, O Father,  
Lord of Heaven and Earth, be-  
cause thou hast hid these Things  
from the Wise and Prudent, and  
hast revealed them unto Babes.*

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HERE is no visible Connexion  
between these Words, and what  
passed immediately before; nor  
is it clearly evident, or gene-  
rally agreed, what it was that gave Occa-  
sion to our Lord, thus to *rejoice in Spirit,*  
and

and to break out into these Expressions of Praise and Thankfulness to his heavenly Lord and Father. He is said *to answer*, though there is nothing in the whole Chapter, but that Question propounded to him in the Beginning of it, by two of *John's* Disciples, that needs an Answer, or will admit of one; so that we can understand no more by that Phrase, but his continuing to speak, and proceeding in his Discourse; or else replying upon himself with Reference to some Subject, whereon he had been secretly ruminating in his Mind.


THE Words that have the greatest Affinity with those now before us of any in the Chapter, are what we read in the End of the 5th Verse: *The Poor have the Gospel preached unto them.* Which *Poor* in that Verse, seems plainly to design the same Persons with *Babes* in this: Those Things which were *hid from the Wise and Prudent, and revealed unto Babes*, we may naturally interpret of the glad Tidings of that *Gospel*, which *the Poor had preached unto them*: The Poverty in one Place, and the Infancy in the other, are of the same

Extent,

SERM. Extent, both have an allegorical Meaning

XIII. besides the plain and literal One, and imply  
 not only a Meanness of Fortune and Depression as to outward Circumstances, but a Poverty of Spirit and Dejectedness of Mind; not only the Weakness and Ignorance, but the artless and undisguised Simplicity, the Openness, Candor, and Submission of a little Child: Such a State, in short, as had both the greatest Need of spiritual Instruction, and was best qualified to receive it. These were the *Poor* to whom the *Gospel* was preached; these the *Babes*, to whom *those Things* were thought fit to be revealed, which were *hid from the worldly wise*.

THE only Difference between the two Passages seems to be, that what our Saviour had urged in the 5th Verse, as a Proof of his own Mission, and an Argument that he was the true Messiah, he makes another Use of at this 25th Verse, where (after a pretty long Digression, containing a Character of St. *John Baptist*, and a Reproof to those uncorrigible, unbelieving Cities, in which he had chiefly wrought his Miracles,) he takes Occasion from the  
 high

high Satisfaction he found in the Success SERM.  
and Efficacy of his Doctrine, to improve XIII.  
the same Reflexion on his converting the   
Poor, and Illumination of the Dark and  
Ignorant, by which he had established his  
own Credit, to the Exaltation of his Fa-  
ther's Name. *I thank thee, O Father,  
Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou  
hast hid these Things from the Wise and  
Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.*

FROM which Words, whether so con-  
nected or not with the above-mentioned  
Passage, toward the Beginning of the Chap-  
ter, yet at least as fit to be compared with  
it, as concurring in the same Design, and  
establishing the same important Truth, we  
may not improperly take a Handle for  
considering the following Points.

*First,* That the revealing the Mysteries  
of Christianity to those who were  
destitute of all saving Knowledge,  
but were spiritually *Poor*, and *Babes*  
in Understanding, was both a proper  
Evidence of our Saviour's divine Mis-  
sion, and a just Matter of Praise to  
Almighty God.

*Secondly,*




*Secondly*, THAT it is a very becoming Instance of Christian Obedience, a laudable Imitation of our blessed Lord, and highly conducing to God's Glory, for us, in our several Capacities, to propagate that Revelation to those who are yet Babes, and who have not yet been initiated, or not so fully as they ought, in the Mysteries of the Gospel.

*Thirdly*, AND this will easily lead me in the *Third Place* to apply the Substance of what shall be advanced under those two Heads, to the Religious and Christian Undertaking that occasions this goodly Appearance of *Poor*, who *have the Gospel preached unto them*; and of *Babes*, to whom those Truths of Christianity are *revealed*, in so edifying a Manner, which, through their own Default, are *hid from the carnally Wise and Prudent*.

*First*, I SHALL endeavour to convince you, that the revealing the Mysteries of  
Christianity



Christianity to those who were destitute of SERM.  
 all saving Knowledge, but were spiritually XIII.  
*poor*, and *Babes* in Understanding, was   
 both a proper Evidence of our Savi-  
 our's divine Mission, and a just Matter of  
 Praise to Almighty God.

AMONG the many other Advantages  
 that were to accrue to Mankind upon the  
 coming of the Messiah, among the di-  
 stinguishing Marks and Characters that  
 were given of him by the Prophets, it  
 was foretold by *Isaiab*, xxix. 19. *The*  
*Meek also shall increase their Joy in the*  
*Lord, and the Poor among Men shall re-*  
*joyce in the Holy One of Israel.* And  
 again, lxi. 1. *The Lord hath anointed me*  
*to proclaim glad Tidings to the Poor:* And  
 the Royal Psalmist, when in the 10th  
 Verse of the lxxviiiith *Psalms*, he had magnifi-  
 ed God for having of *his Goodness prepared*  
*for the Poor*, proceeds to shew us in the  
 following Verse, what Sort of Preparation  
 he had made for them, *viz.* a Provision of  
 spiritual Food and Nourishment proper  
 for the Soul, an Abundance of Doctrine  
 and Plenty of the Word, in Opposition to  
 that *Famine of the Word*, which is threat-

SERM. ened in the Prophecy of *Amos*, as one of  
 XIII. the greatest Curses that can befall a People.

— *The Lord gave the Word, great was the  
 Company of Preachers, of them that published  
 it, Psal. lxxviii. 11. And elsewhere,  
 Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings  
 hast thou ordained Strength, Psal. viii. 2.*

IN Allusion to which Predictions, our  
 Saviour, in the Chapter of the Text, in-  
 sists on his preaching the Gospel to the  
 Poor, as one of the principal Marks by  
 which he was to be known. For when  
*John the Baptist* had sent two of his Dis-  
 ciples to enquire of him, whether he were  
 the Christ or not? *Art thou He that should  
 come, or do we look for another?* He re-  
 turned this short but significant Answer by  
 them; *Go and tell John again those Things  
 which ye do see and hear; the Blind receive  
 their Sight, the Lame walk, the Lepers are  
 cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are  
 raised up, and the Poor have the Gospel  
 preached unto them.*

As much as to say, Consider what you  
 have either seen me do, or heard attested  
 by credible Witnesses; compare my Actions  
 with those ascribed by the Prophets to the  
 Messiah,

Messiah, observe exactly how all Circumstances agree, and you will not need any Declaration of mine to certify you whether I am the Christ or not. And this indeed was the most proper and convincing Argument he could have used ; for the bare averring such a Thing, without Proof, the pretending to a divine Mission, without shewing his Credentials, would have given little Satisfaction, and scarce have procured him many Profelytes.

BUT when he appeals to their own Senses, when he desires them but to make a true Report of those Things which they had seen and heard, and leaves them to judge of his Authority by his Actions, he took the most effectual Way to remove all Scruples, and to leave them without Excuse, if they did not believe in him. Those who would never have given him any Credit on his own Word and Affelevation, were much better convinced, when he bid them believe *for the very Work's Sake.* When they beheld the maimed and defective Organs of Sense and Motion, which were lost beyond the Help of Physick, or Recovery of Art, restored to their former

SERM. Use, without any other Application than  
 XIII. that of a few Words ; when they beheld  
 dead Bodies restored to Life, and dying  
 ones to Health ; how the poor and calamitous of the Earth were invited to be Partakers of the gracious Terms of the Gospel Covenant ; and those who had no Possessions on Earth, were taught to expect a Kingdom in Heaven : All which were most visible Tokens and Indications of the true Messiah ; there was no opposing such powerful Conviction, nor withstanding the Force of such irresistible Evidence.

BUT it may possibly be objected, That the last of these Tokens, which is most to our present Purpose, had Nothing miraculous in it, and was therefore a less distinguishing Note of his Divinity than any of the others. Men may be apt to imagine, that there needed no supernatural Aid or divine Impulse to enable him to execute the Office of a Preacher, and instruct the ignorant Multitude in the Rules of plain Morality, for which he might easily be qualified by a Readiness of Invention, and Fluency of Speech, without a  
 Commission

Commission from on High, and by less than a Divine Power. SERM.  
XIII.

BUT yet if we respect the amazing Efficacy and Success of the Doctrine he delivered, and the Influence it had on the Lives of those that heard it ; how convincingly he silenced the Gain-saying, how graciously he enlightened the Ignorant, how happily he reformed the Vicious, with what admirable Dexterity he avoided the insidious Questions of the Captious and Insnaring ; if we consider how all who heard him, even when a Child, *were amazed at his Understanding and Answers* : How the Officers who were sent to apprehend him, had not Power to execute their Commission, but with Astonishment confessed, that *never Man spake like that Man*. If we consider the peculiar Worth and Excellence of those Rules which he enjoined, of what exceeding Benefit and Importance they are to Mankind, and how much they tend to the improving human Nature, and raising it to the highest Degree of Perfection ; it will sufficiently appear, that in the Discharge of this humble and condescending Office, he acted by as

SERM. divine a Power, and gave as convincing  
 XIII. Proofs of his heavenly Original, as in any  
 of the others ; that he was no less considerable in that Mount on which he preached, than in that on which he was transfigured ; when he conversed with Publicans and Sinners, than when he talked with *Moses* and *Elias* : when he familiarly stiled himself the *Son of Man*, than when he was proclaimed the *Son of God* from Heaven ; when he converted those who were dead in their Sins, and raised in them a Newness of Life, than when, in a literal Sense, he raised from the Dead the departed *Lazarus*, and the Widow's Son.

EVEN the Obscurity and low Estate of those who first received the Publication, which by some of the Enemies of the Cross, has been urged as an Argument against the Credit of the Publisher, does, on the contrary, more undeniably establish and confirm it. Thus it behoved Christ to converse, such *lost Sheep* was he to *seek and save*, such *Sinners* did he *come to call to Repentance*, to reduce such Wanderers into the Way, to be a *Light* to those who thus *sat in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death*,

*Death, and to guide their Feet into the* SERM  
*Way of Peace.* XIII.


HAD he taken any other Measures in propagating his Religion ; had he apply'd himself to the great and leading Men of the Age and Nation where he lived ; had he courted the Powers that were then in Being, to countenance his Design ; had he sought to establish it by the Help of a confederate and united Faction, and the powerful Influence of a prevailing Party, (which human Prudence would have suggested to him, as the most likely Methods of succeeding, if he had not been conscious that it was able to make its Way by the Force of its own native Conviction, though in the Hands of the weakest Instruments) he would not have corresponded so exactly with the Description of the Messiah by the Prophets, and we should have wanted one powerful Argument for the Truth of Christianity.

AND as his proceeding in this Manner was a proper Evidence of his being sent from Heaven, so was it likewise a just Matter of Praise to Almighty God. The faithful Execution of his Will, and Ac-

SERM. accomplishment of his Purposes, by such  
 XIII. Methods, and under such Regulations as  
 he has thought fit to prescribe, is always highly acceptable and well-pleasing to him, and was never more acceptable than in the several Steps that were taken by the Redeemer of Mankind, toward the effecting that Redemption. If at the first Formation of the World he survey'd the several Parts of his Workmanship, and with Pleasure pronounced, *that they were good*, i. e. comformable to the Model in his eternal Mind, and adorned with such Kinds and Degrees of Perfection, as he had allotted to the several Species that compos'd it; with how much greater Satisfaction did he survey the new Creation, the Renovation of fallen Man, his Regeneration *by Water and the holy Ghost*, the sanctifying and cleansing him, making in him *a new Heart and a new Spirit*, instructed in the Knowledge of God's Will, enclined to the Observance of it, and set right in the Way that leads to eternal Life!

SUCH a glorious and happy Change he resolv'd to make, and to effect it by the Mediation of his ever-blessed Son: And that



that Son who was all Obedience, whose SERM.  
Meat and Drink it was to perform his Fa- XIII.  
ther's Will, and to cause it to be perfor-   
med by others, undertook the gracious  
Work, and not only executed the main  
Substance of his Commission, but com-  
plied with it in the Manner and all the  
Circumstances. And particularly with re-  
gard to the Persons to whom the Truths  
of the Gospel were first to be declared,  
who were first to be *begotten again unto a  
lively Hope*; to be *renewed in their inward  
Man*, and *in the Spirit of their Mind*:  
He applied himself, as directed, not to  
the Great and Powerful, not to the Wise  
and Learned, but to those of low Condi-  
tion and ordinary Capacities; that when  
the Cause should appear to thrive so well,  
and spread so far, under the Management of  
such weak and despicable Agents; the  
Power by which they acted, and the Truths  
which they proclaimed, might be confes-  
sed to be of God, and not of Man, that  
all Men might ascribe the Glory to him  
who, *destroyeth the Wisdom of the Wise,*  
*and bringeth to nothing the Understanding*  
*of the Prudent*; 1 Cor. i. 19. and for that  
Reason

SERM. Reason hath, *not called many wise Men*  
 XIII. *after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not ma-*  
 ny Noble; but hath chosen the foolish  
 Things of the World to confound the Wise,  
 and the weak Things of the World to confound  
 the Things that are mighty. ver. 26, 27.

IT was his pleasing Reflexion on the display of God's Glory in accomplishing his Designs by the most unlikely Means, that vented it self in those Expressions of Joy we meet with in my Text; *I thank thee, O Father, &c.*

THE proper Matter of his rejoicing was not, we may be sure, the Concealment of the Gospel Truths from any Body. He who was, *the true Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World: Job. i. 19. Who would have all to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4.* could not be delighted with any one's Continuance in Error. The Rich and Knowing were to have their Share of the Revelation likewise, but the Poor and Ignorant were the Channel through which it was to be conveyed to them. This happy Order and Oeconomy of dispensing the Gospel, this *raising the Poor out of the Mire, and setting him above the Princes of*  
*the*

*the People*; this *filling the Hungry with* SERM.  
*good Things, and sending the Rich empty* XIII.  
*away, till those being first replenished,*  
should invite them to partake of their spi-  
ritual Sustenance: This, I say, was the  
direct Ground of his Exultation, not that  
these Things were *totally* hid from the  
wise and prudent, but that they were *so*  
*long* hid till after they had been revealed  
to Babes. I am now to shew in the

*Second Place*, That it is a very becom-  
ing Instance of Christian Obedience, a  
laudable Imitation of our blessed Lord, and  
highly conducing to God's Glory, for us,  
in our several Capacities, to propagate that  
Revelation to those who are still Babes,  
and who have not yet been initiated, or  
not so fully as they ought, in the Myste-  
ries of the Gospel.

THE great Author of our Religion ha-  
ving imparted to his Church such saving  
and useful Truths, as were sufficient to  
direct us in the Way to Happiness, and  
appointed a Succession of Pastors and  
Teachers, with an Authority derivable to  
others throughout all Ages, to preserve the  
Knowledge of those sacred Truths, to  
spread

SERM. spread and diffuse them through all Na-  
 XIII. tions, and publish to the whole World the  
 glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation ; to de-  
 declare that Method of Reconciliation to  
 God, and of attaining eternal Life, which  
 he had declared to them ; having done  
 thus much, I say, and finished the Work  
 he had to do on Earth, he was taken from  
 them into Heaven, but left them with this  
 Promise, that he would still be spiritually  
 present with them *to the End of the World* ;  
 that he would send them *another Comforter*,  
 that should *lead them into all Truth*,  
 and enable them to lead others, and with  
 an express Charge, that they should make  
 it their Endeavour so to do.

Thus did our blessed Redeemer lay the  
 Foundation of an universal Church, with  
 sufficient Encouragement to the whole  
 Race of Mankind to shelter themselves  
 within its Pale, and become Converts to  
 Christianity, and with a Command to  
 those who are already admitted, who have  
 been, *Heb. vi. 4, 5. enlightened, and have  
 tasted of the heavenly Gift, and the good  
 Word of God, and the Powers of the World  
 to come*, with a Command, I say, to them,

to be zealous in imparting that Light to others, which has been so freely communicated to them; to demonstrate the Sincerity of that Love of God and their Neighbour, which, if they are true Members of the Christian Church, must necessarily possess their Hearts, by shewing a tender Regard for the Souls of Men; by revealing those Treasures of hidden Wisdom, of which they have been hitherto unhappily deprived; by labouring with all Diligence and Care, with all Humility and Condescension, with all Earnestness and Affection, to rectify their Mistakes, to remove their Prejudices, and give them as clear an Understanding as may be of the Things that belong to their Happiness and Salvation.


IF all who have professed the Name of Christ, had been acted by such a Spirit as this; if every one would have applied to himself that Exhortation of our Saviour to St. Peter, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren*: Had every one made it a Matter of Conscience, not barely to be a Christian himself, but to contribute in the best Manner he was able to  
the

SERM.  
XIII.  
~

SERM. the making others so; if such a Spirit as  
 XIII. this, I say, had all along prevailed among  
 the Members of the Church, the dark  
 Corners of the Earth might long since  
 have been illuminated, Christendom might  
 have had the same Bounds with the habi-  
 table Globe; not only the Sound of the  
 Gospel might have been heard, but its  
 Doctrines received in all Lands, and all  
*the Ends of the World might have seen and  
 enjoyed the Salvation of our God.*

BUT how backward soever the Gene-  
 rality of Believers may have been in this  
 Respect, or how short soever they may  
 have fallen of what might justly be ex-  
 pected from them, this makes nothing at  
 all against the Rule, their Duty lies plain  
 before them, they are expressly command-  
 ed to *follow after the Things wherewith  
 one may edify another; to consider one ano-  
 ther, to provoke unto Love and to good  
 Works; not to seek their own Profit, but  
 the Profit of many, that they may be saved;  
 to have Compassion on their Brethren, and  
 save them, plucking them [as Firebrands]  
 out of the Fire.*


FROM such imminent Danger we have  
 all been preserved our selves; thus mer-  
 cifully

cifully has our gracious Redeemer delivered SERM.  
us from the Brink of Ruin, releas'd us XIII.  
from the most galling Yoke and slavish   
Bondage, and brought us from the Power  
of Satan unto God. And can we refuse  
to copy him in those good Works, so far  
as our Capacity extends, of which we our  
selves have been the happy Objects? Shall  
we, on whom the Light of the Gospel has  
shone in so glorious a Manner, eclipse and  
contract the Beams of it, and not suffer  
them to dart into those obscure Re-  
gions, where the *Prince of this World* still  
rules with a despotick Sway, blinding his  
Vassals with the grossest Superstitions, and  
corrupting them with the foulest Immora-  
lities? Do we think our own Happiness  
would be the less, if we should contribute  
to the Increase of theirs? Are we jealous  
of Rivals in God's Favour, or apprehensive  
that the Kingdom of Heaven would not  
be large enough to receive us, if too many  
should be sav'd? Would we shelter our  
own Indevotion and Profaneness, and  
Neglect of Duty, under the greater Enor-  
mities of those unenlightened Wretches,  
and imagine we shall be reputed less cul-  
pable

SERM. pable for being *bad Christians*, because  
 XIII. there are some who are *meer Heathens*?

Or is it nothing else but a supine Negligence and lazy Inadvertence; a Contempt of those miserable People, who are destitute of Christian Knowledge, and not thinking them worth our Notice, that makes the glorious Design of communicating the Gospel to them go on so heavily, and meet with so small an Encouragement? Alas! how different a Notion have we of the Value of Souls from that of our blessed Lord? Or what must have become of us, if he had set so low a Price on ours, as we on theirs? How justly may he reproach us for such uncharitable Neglect, as the Master in the Parable did the unmerciful Servant; *Shouldest not thou also have had Compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had Pity on thee?* Mat. xviii. How ill do we follow the Direction he has given us a little after my Text: *Learn of me, for I am meeke and lowly in Heart?* How unjustly do we *hide our Light under a Bushel*, and *take away that Key of Knowledge*, that should unlock the Mysteries of the Gospel to those from whom they are as yet hidden! How little



little do we consult the Glory of God, SERM.  
which ought to be the chief End of all XIII.  
our Actions, by deferring to make known   
the Wonders of his Providence, and his  
infinite Love to Man, in so graciously con-  
triving the Means of his Restauration to  
Grace and Favour ; where it must, and  
will be one Day made manifest, whether  
we will be the Instruments of it, or no ;  
As if we were possessed with a more than  
*Jewish* Selfishness, and resolved to confine  
that Redemption to ourselves, which he  
intended for the universal Benefit of Man-  
kind !

I AM making these Expostulations among  
those, who, I know, are sensible of the  
Justness of them, and who have long been  
labouring to prevent the unhappy Occasion  
that has been given for them, and not  
without a good Degree of Success ; but  
the Concurrence of all Hands and Hearts  
is requisite toward the accomplishing a  
Work of so large a Compass, and the  
Want of that is what I sincerely lament ;  
but I am willing to believe that *Her Ma-*  
*jestys* Gracious Letter, requiring a Collec-  
tion to be made for the carrying on that

SERM. godly Undertaking, and appointed to be  
 XIII. read in all our Churches the next Lord's  
 ~~~~~ Day, will very much encrease the Num-  
 ber of those who make the propagating
 of Christian Knowledge their peculiar Care,
 and that the Exhortations to that Purpose
 will have a good Effect; and therefore I
 will not too far anticipate the Subject.

I HAVE a Charity of a nearer and more
 immediate Concern at present to recom-
 mend to you, if any farther Recommen-
 dation be requisite of those, whose innocent
 Look, whose modest Garb, whose unaf-
 fected Plainness, whose orderly Proceſſion,
 whose towardly Manners and regular Be-
 haviour, whose ready Submission to Dis-
 cipline, and happy Improvement under
 it, do so engagingly plead for them, and
 carry such a winning Persuasion.

Thirdly, FOR this was the *Third* Thing
 I proposed, *viz.* to apply the Substance of
 what has been advanced under the Two
 former Heads, to the religious and Chri-
 stian Undertaking that occasions this goodly
 Appearance of *Poor*, who *have the Gospel*
preached unto them; and of *Babes*, to
 whom

whom those Truths of Christianity are revealed, which are hid from the wordly wife. SERM.
XIII.

AND sure if the revealing the Mysteries of the Gospel to those who, in any Sense, were Babes, was at first a Demonstration of the *Truth* of Christianity; the revealing it now with such Success, to these who are literally so, is a Demonstration of the *Power* of it. Such a well-laid Foundation in the Principles of the Christian Faith, so forward a Proficiency in Children of such tender Years; such a *Readiness to give an Answer to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them*, is no inconsiderable Proof that God is with us of a Truth, and that such as are meek and tractable among us, *them will he teach his Way*.

IF the bringing his Purposes to pass by the most helpless Agents and weakest Instruments, be conducive to God's Glory, and an Argument of his providential Care and Direction of human Affairs; what Agents so helpless as these, what Instruments so weak? and yet, what *Strength has he ordained? What Praise has he perfected*

SERM. *fected out of the Mouth of these Babes?*

XIII. What an Air of primitive Simplicity do we see reviving? How blessed a Resemblance of the Beginnings of the Gospel-Age in the several Parts of her Majesty's Dominions? How laudable a Correspondence has been settled and maintained among the distant Promoters of this good Work, who carry on a religious Commerce, and negotiate for the Good of Souls? How pleasant is it to observe, that from the Time it was first undertaken, it has never intermitted or stood still, never cooled upon their Hands, much less has it gone backward, but, as it appears, upon comparing every Year's Account with that of the foregoing, the Number of Schools and Scholars, and the Contributions for maintaining them, have been still growing and encreasing, and the Lord has been continually *adding to the Church such as, we trust, shall be saved?* Thus is that *Grain of Mustard Seed*, which was *cast into the Ground, become a great Tree*, and that Tree is in a fair Probability of spreading to a Grove.

AND I will not distrust, but that the delightful Spectacle of this Day, the humble

ble Proceſſion, the decent Appearance, the reverent Deportment, and the harmonious Conſort of thoſe Innocents now before you, far more affecting than the Solemnities of the gayeſt Triumph, or the fictitious Paſſions of a Theatrical Representation; I will not diſtruſt, I ſay, but that ſo many perſuaſive Arguments, and (if that could add any Weight to a Rhetorick ſo much more cogent) the earneſt Endeavour of the Advocate who is now pleading in their Behalf, will, with God's Bleſſing, touch the Heart of ſome new Benefactor, and open ſome freſh Spring of Bounty to water and reſreſh theſe godly Nurseries, which give us ſo fair a Specimen of the Reformation of Manners in this Age, and I hope in God, will compleat and perfect it in the next at leaſt.

WHEN we obſerve the ſurprizing Pro-
ficiency of theſe Children in the Know-
ledge and Practice of their Duty, to a De-
gree that could ſcarce have been believed,
till it was thus tried; how few in ſo large
a Number have proved remarkably vicious
and incorrigible? How few have wanted
either a Capacity to retain even long Ca-

SERM. *techetical* Answers, with the Scripture-
 XIII. Proofs, or a decent Courage to pronounce
 them audibly and distinctly in a full Con-
 gregation, not even those of the Female
 Sex? This will convince us, how much
 the Soul of Man may be improved by
 good Nurture and Education; and that it
 is not any Inability or Defect of Nature,
 (which too often bears the Blame) but
 Negligence and Sloth, or a wrong Me-
 thod of Instruction, that makes the Ge-
 nerality of other Children appear with less
 Advantage.

BLESSED be God! we have many ex-
 cellent Seminaries of Religion and Learn-
 ing, where the Children of the better Sort
 may be well grounded in all useful Know-
 ledge, in all that can adorn this Life, or
 fit them for a better.

BUT without Disparagement or Injustice
 to those hopeful Nurseries, I may venture
 to affirm, that there is no Way of Instruc-
 tion so generally successful, where there
 are so few Miscarriages, or so compleatly
 framed for the breeding up good Chri-
 stians, as in these Charity-Schools.

THUS

THUS amply has the wise Providence SERM.
of God compensated the Disadvantages of XIII.
the Poor and Indigent, in wanting many
of the Conveniencies of this Life, by a
more abundant Provision for their Happi-
ness in the next. Had they been higher
born, or more richly endowed, they would
have wanted this Manner of Education,
of which those only enjoy the Benefit, who
are low enough to submit to it; where
they have such Advantages *without Money
and without Price*, as the Rich cannot
purchase with it; the Learning which is
given, is generally more edifying to them,
than that which is *sold* to others: Thus
do they become more exalted in Goodness,
by being depressed in Fortune, and their
Poverty is, in Reality, their Prefer-
ment.

LET us thankfully adore the divine
Goodness, that in the midst of an Age
which seemed abandoned to Vice and Ir-
religion, abounding with so much Corrup-
tion, with so many Examples of Profane-
ness and Debauchery, has raised up such a
Spirit of Piety and Charity, and put it
into the Hearts of many worthy Persons

SERM. to combine together for all good Purposes,

XIII. to form themselves into Societies, to join
 ~~~~~ their united Endeavours, and contribute largely out of the Substance wherewith God hath blessed them, toward the extirpating of Vice and Ignorance, giving a new Turn to the State of Christianity, supporting and propagating that Religion, of which profane Scoffers and Atheistical Cabals were plotting the Subversion.

THAT he has endued them with Constancy and Resolution to persevere in so good a Work, and *not to be weary of Well-doing*; and enclined them to think no Labour too great, no Office too mean, that may be serviceable to the Christian Cause; that Persons of good Birth and liberal Fortunes, should submit to be the Overseers of those Poor, who are maintained by their own Charity, that they should make it their Business to look into their little Wants, and become as it were their Stewards and Servants, in Imitation of that lowly and condescending Act of our blessed Saviour, when *he washed the Feet of his own Disciples*, or when he told them, *I am among you as he that serveth.*



THE many excellent Benefits that arise SERM.  
from this well-placed Charity, to the XIII.  
Children themselves, to Families, to Pa-  
rishes, to the Church and Nation, have  
been often set forth with great Ad-  
vantage, on former Occasions of this  
Nature ; many of which, though at  
first they were but *pious Presages*, have  
been since made good by undeniable Ex-  
perience, as I doubt not but all the rest,  
which there has not yet been Time enough  
to make manifest, will appear to be upon  
farther Trial.

IT has been the peculiar Happiness of  
this Charity, that there have been no Com-  
plaints of any Misapplication of the Funds  
that are destined to this pious Use, which  
are too often alledged against others of a  
publick Nature : No colourable Objection  
of any kind has been made against it, nor  
indeed can it meet with Opposition from  
any, but those who are unwilling that the  
Empire of the Devil should be weakened,  
that Vice and Immorality should lose any  
Ground, and who are the declared Ene-  
mies of God and Goodness.

BUT

SERM. BUT however the *God of this World*  
 XIII. has blinded the Children of Disobedience,  
 that they *will not see, nor understand and*  
*be converted*; but despising the Treasures  
 of God's Word, and the Light of his holy  
 Gospel, put their Trust in *wordly Riches*,  
 and value themselves upon their *carnal*  
*Policy*; *We thank thee, O Father, Lord of*  
*Heaven and Earth, that the Things which*  
*are thus hidden, through their own De-*  
*fault, from the wise and prudent, (as the*  
*World accounts Prudence) thou hast re-*  
*vealed unto these Babes.* For which, and  
 all other thy Mercies,

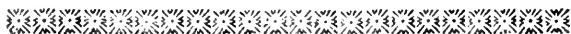
*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but*  
*unto thy Name be the Praise, &c.*





## SERMON XIV.

At the opening of the Church of  
*St. Mary at Hill*, after Reparation.  
*December 31, 1716.*



EXOD. XXV. 2.

*Speak unto the Children of Israel,  
 that they bring me an Offering :  
 of every Man, that giveth it  
 willingly with his Heart, ye shall  
 take my Offering.*




THE Purpose for which the Of-  
 fering here spoken of, was to  
 be given by the Children of  
*Israel*, was for the building a  
 Tabernacle, and providing the sacred Uten-  
 sils appertaining to it. The Law was now  
 newly

SERM.  
 XIV.


426 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. newly delivered to *Moses*, and there wanted an Ark to be the Repository of the

XIV.  Two Tables of Stone, whereon it was engraved, and a Tabernacle to be the Repository of that, as also for other religious Uses.

THE People of God were yet in an unsettled State, they had broke loose from their *Egyptian* Bondage, and were on their Way toward the promised Land; but many Difficulties remained to be surmounted, a long Journey to be taken through a Land possessed by Enemies, many Nations to be subdued, many Mutinies to be quelled, much Despondency, backsliding, and forward Disobedience was necessary to be tamed among themselves, as they were a querulous discontented People, and ever prone to Rebellion, before they could arrive at the appointed Place of Rest.

UNDER these Circumstances there was no such Thing to be expected as a fixed Place of Worship; it had been a Scheme altogether unpracticable and unreasonable: To what Purpose indeed should they have projected a Fabrick, which they had no Prospect of staying to employ to its proper Use,

Uſe, while they were daily in a travelling S E R M.  
Poſture, and in conſtant Expectation of XIV.  
being called away to make ſome farther   
Progreſs toward the Land of *Canaan*, per-  
haps before they had well laid the Foun-  
dation, at leaſt before they could finally  
have accompliſhed ſuch a Structure? Nor  
was the longeſt Abode they made at any  
one Place during their Forty Years ſojourn-  
ing, of ſuch Duration, as to warrant upon  
any rational Grounds, their engaging in ſo  
difficult and tedious an Undertaking.


BUT yet the Service of their great Cre-  
ator and gracious Benefactor, who had ſa-  
ved them with ſuch a mighty Hand, who  
governed and conducted them with ſuch a  
ſucceſſive Train of Miracles, was not in  
the mean Time to be intermitted. Nay,  
it was highly requiſite in order to their  
more devout and regular Celebration of his  
Praiſe, that he ſhould be worſhipped in  
ſome Place appropriated to himſelf, and  
ſeparated from profane Uſes.

To reconcile which two diſagreeing  
Views, it pleaſed the divine Artificer him-  
ſelf to project for them that moveable  
and portable Edifice, called the Taberna-  
cle,

SERM. cle, which journeyed as they did from  
 XIV. Place to Place, wherever they encamped  
 was ready for their Reception, through all  
 their several Stages in the Wilderness:  
 And even after they were possessed of the  
 Land of Promise, continued for some Hun-  
 dreds of Years to answer the same End,  
 even beyond the Days of *David*, till his  
 Son and Successor *Solomon* arose, a Prince  
 that enjoyed a peaceful Reign, and an un-  
 exhausted Affluence of Wealth, which  
 was likewise accompanied with a munifi-  
 cent Spirit, a sincere Devotion, and an  
 earnest Zeal for God's Glory: And *he* was  
 appointed by divine Providence to effect  
 that, which his Father *David*, whose  
 Hands had been too deep in Blood, though  
 he passionately desired it, was not per-  
 mitted to engage in; I mean, to be the  
 Founder of that noble and magnificent  
 Structure the Temple at *Jerusalem*.

BUT till Things should be in a full  
 State of Maturity for the executing so vast  
 a Design, there was a temporary Help  
 provided. The Tabernacle in the mean  
 Time, was to be the Place of Resort for  
 the Performance of religious Duties. The  
 several

several Materials of which, the Form and S E R M.  
Manner of its Structure, and the several XIV.

Ornaments with which it was embellished,  are described at large in the Chapter of my Text, and those which follow it; and at whose Cost it was erected, you will be informed from the Words now before us. *Speak unto the Children of Israel, says the Lord to Moses, that they bring me an Offering: of every Man that giveth it willingly with his Heart, ye shall take my Offering.*


THIS Building then, you see, though it was equally with the Temple ordered and directed by God himself, to whose Service it was consecrated, yet was not like that carried on at the Expence of any single Person: It took not its Rise from the pious Liberality of a Royal Founder, but from the mutual Benevolence and joint Contributions of his religiously affected People, of those who brought in such prescribed Materials, as were proper for its Use and Ornament, willingly and with their Hearts, without which Condition their Oblation was not to be accepted.

How

SERM. How very readily they contributed on  
 XIV. this Occasion, and in what a full Stream  
 their Bounty flowed in, we have a very  
 convincing Testimony a few Chapters forward, infomuch that the overflowing and redundancy of it was even restrained by an Injunction of *Moses*, upon a Complaint of the Workmen employed, of the too great Abundance. For we read in the 36th Chapter at the 4th and following Verses, that they *came away every Man from his Work, and spake unto Moses, saying, the People bring much more than enough for the Service of the Work which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave Commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the Camp, saying, Let neither Man nor Woman make any more Work for the Offering of the Sanctuary. So the People were restrained from bringing. For the Stuff they had was sufficient for all the Work to make it, and too much.*

AND NOW from this Instance before us, of God's requiring his People to build him an House at their common Charge, and the particular Disposition of Mind with which he expects the Encouragers of so good



good a Work to be affected, the Doctrine SERM.  
I shall raise may be reduced to these Pro- XIV.  
positions, 

*First*, THAT the building, repairing, and beautifying Places of publick Worship, and paying a decent Regard to them when built, is a Service with which God is well pleased. But

*Secondly*, THAT in this and all other good Works, he regards not so much the outward Act, as the Sincerity and Cheerfulness of the Mind. If we hope to recommend our selves to his Favour, we must give willingly and with all our Heart.

*First*, THAT the building, &c. That it was so under the *Jewish* Dispensation, not only the Place of Scripture I am now discoursing on, but numberless other Places in the Old Testament, make it evident beyond all Exception. All this is there required to be done by God's express Command: those who on such Occasions were

SERM. most zealous and reverent, are commend-

XIV. ed and rewarded in the highest Degree, and all Neglecters or Profaners of holy Places are punished in the most exemplary Manner. It would be endless to enumerate particular Passages, and needless indeed to maintain a Point that no Body contradicts. For all do and must allow that, under the Law at least, the Supreme LORD, even that GOD who at the same Time thought fit to declare that he dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, *i. e.* he did not so dwell in them, as to be confined or comprehended in them, for how can that be affirmed of him, whom the utmost Extent of Space cannot comprehend? yet even he, I say, challenges a peculiar Propriety in Places dedicated to his Honour, and often declares his Delight in them, and his residing and being present in them in a peculiar Manner, more eminently than he is present in other Parts of the Universe.

BUT there are those who, admitting all this to be true, while the Mosaical Covenant was in Force, that a Reverence for Places and Things Sacred was at that Time required

required and necessary to be paid, will yet SERM.  
pretend that this was no more than legal XIV.  
Righteousness; that the Case is quite al-  
tered under the Evangelical State, that  
what was then an Act of Duty, is now  
become an Act of Superstition, that Christ  
has set us free from such vain Observances,  
and taken away all such frivolous Distinc-  
tions; that God, who is present every  
where, will accept of our sincere Service  
any where, and that if our Prayers and  
Praises are offered to him with a pure and  
honest Mind, the Oblation is equally well-  
pleasing to him, whether it be made in  
a Church or in a Stable.

BUT I would only ask of those who  
argue in this Manner, why, if the Distinc-  
tion of Place be so silly and superstitious,  
should not the Distinction of Time be so  
too? Why, if one Place be no more sa-  
cred than another, should one Day be  
more sacred than another? Or why should  
they suppose the Almighty to be so tena-  
cious of his Right, as to require One Day  
in Seven to be inviolably kept holy,  
and dedicated entirely to his Service, but  
not One Inch of Space in the whole Com-

SERM. pass of the Globe? Is it not the same God  
 XIV. who assigns us our Number of Days, and  
 likewise our Portion upon Earth, and may  
 he not challenge at our Hands a Part of  
 the one by the same Rule that he does a  
 Part of the other? As he is present with  
 us in all Places, so is he likewise at all  
 Times; as he can hear us from a Stable  
 as well as from a Church, so can he like-  
 wise on a *Saturday* as well as on his own  
 Day.

I CHUSE to make this Reply to the  
 Objection, passing by several other sub-  
 stantial Answers that might be given, be-  
 cause I think it cannot but have a pecu-  
 liar Weight with those who have been  
 most free in urging the Objection, as it is  
 a reasoning with them from an acknow-  
 ledged Principle of their own. They are  
 generally (for which I cannot but com-  
 mend them) very strict Observers of the  
 Sabbath. They are too apt (which is not  
 so commendable) to value themselves as  
 more righteous than their Neighbours, for  
 observing it more nicely and punctually  
 than they. And yet there is no one Cir-  
 cumstance they can urge against Reverence  
 due

due to appropriated Places, which will not hold with equal Force against Reverence due to appropriated Times; nothing which they can say in Defence of Profaners of Churches, which will not justify Sabbath-breakers too by Parity of Reason. S E R M.  
XIV.

WILL they alledge that they do not keep the Sabbath as a Relique of Judaism, nor for the Reason that *that* People observed it, in Commemoration of their Rest from *Egyptian* Slavery, but as an Institution antecedent to the Law of *Moses*, and appointed by God as soon as he had finished his Work of the Creation, that then he sanctified the Seventh Day, and laid an eternal Obligation on the whole Race of Men to dedicate to him such a Proportion of their Time? May it not be said in this Case likewise, that God put in as early a Claim to a Part of the World he had made, as of the Time for which he made it? For did he not reserve to himself the Tree of Knowledge, when he gave *Adam* the Dominion of every Thing else? And again, upon *his* Expulsion for his Disobedience, did he not enclose and appropriate to himself the whole Garden

SERM. of *Eden*, and guard it from profane Ap-  
 XIV. proaches, by placing Cherubims there  
 with a flaming Sword? And to omit many  
 other Instances, did he not at his first Ap-  
 pearance to *Moses* in the Bush, antecedent-  
 ly to his giving him the Law, give him a  
 Caution that the Place whereon he stood,  
 was holy Ground, and require him to ap-  
 proach it with Reverence?

THE sanctifying of Places therefore  
 stands on the same Foot with the sanctify-  
 ing of Time, has the same Antiquity to  
 plead, and is equally founded as to the  
 Fact, on the Authority of sacred Writ,  
 and as to the Reason of it, on the eternal  
 Laws of Truth and Equity.

I readily confess, that the immense and  
 omnipresent God is both able and willing  
 to attend to the Requests of all his Sup-  
 pliants, from whencesoever they are made  
 known unto him. There is no Wilder-  
 ness so solitary, no Cottage so homely, no  
 Dungeon so loathsome, as to be exempted  
 from his Inspection and Regard. He  
 listened to the Complaints of holy *Job*,  
 when he lay groveling on the Dunghill;  
 he hearkened to the Petition of *Daniel*,  
 that

that was made to him from the Den of Lions, and of *Jonah* from the Belly of the Fish. He heareth the Mournings of such as are in Captivity, and of the Children appointed unto Death. The midnight Praises of *Paul* and *Silas* ascended into his Ears from within the Prison Walls, and drew down his Assistance. On such an Occasion, in such an Exigence, the noisome and gloomy Jail was as acceptable an Oratory to him, and appeared in his Eye with as amiable a Lustre, as all the gaudy Decorations of the most magnificent Temple; and the Rattling of Chains was as agreeable Musick, as the Sound of an Organ, or the Chanting of a Choir.

SERM.  
XIV.



BUT what was it, do we think, that reconciled him to these Addressies of his Servants, when presented to him in so disadvantageous a Manner and with so little of outward Reverence? What engaged him to dispense with external Forms, and suffer his Votaries to approach him with such an Air of Negligence? Was it not the Infirmary, the Disability, the Constraint they were under? Was it not because they were destitute of Means to offer him a more de-

SERM. cent Worship, because he saw that what

XIV. was defective in their Service, was not the  
 Result of their Choice, but of Necessity ?

FOR can we imagine, that any of the holy Persons above-named, would have chose to go into those unseemly Places on Purpose to serve God there, if they had had free Liberty to do it with due Solemnity in his holy Temple ? God therefore, who accepteth a Man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not, and who requireth of no Man beyond what he is able to perform, was satisfied with the Intention, instead of the outward Act, for the same Reason that he was satisfied with the poor Widow's Mite, because how mean soever the Offering was in itself, she had done the best in her Power, she had cast in all she had, even all her Living.

THE Almighty is ready to make such reasonable Allowances, not only to single Persons in the Exercise of their private Devotions, where indeed there is less of Form and Ceremony at any Time requisite ; but also to Numbers of his faithful People who assemble themselves together for the Invoca-  
 tion



tion of his Name, and setting forth his Praise, when the Exigence of their Affairs requires it. SERM.  
XIV.

THE first Converts to the Christian Faith he suffered to meet in upper Rooms, in secret Corners and obscure Recesses, and sometimes, when the Fury of their Persecutors was most implacable, in Woods and Deserts, and Caves of the Earth; and yet even in those clandestine Assemblies he was present with them, approved of their Zeal, and countenanced their godly Communication.

Now although in such a tumultuous State of Things, it was unavoidable but that much of that Regularity would be wanting, that may be observed by a well-established Congregation, yet it was even under those Circumstances, that *St. Paul* gave his Injunction for the doing every Thing decently and in Order, *i. e.* so far as it was possible for them, under their present Discouragements, to observe any Order or Decorum: Even in such Places of Worship as they were then forced to be contented with, he required a reverent Behaviour, and taxes it as a great Profanation to do their common Acts in so sacred

440 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*  
SERM. cred a Place. *What, have ye not Houses,*  
XIV. *says he, to eat and to drink in, or despise*  
*ye the Church of God?*

ST. *Paul*, you see, thought it no Superstition to account one Place more holy than another, whose Words I would recommend to the sober Consideration of those who deride our Consecration of Churches as an idle Ceremony, as useless, and ill-grounded, and derived down to us among the gross Remains of Jewish or Heathenish Antiquity.

IT is manifest from this Passage, that as early as the Apostles Days, there were appropriated Places for the Performance of Christian Worship, to which all the Reverence and Regard was required to be paid, which the suffering Estate of the Church would then admit of. And consequently, that when the Rage of Persecution abated, and Christianity came under the Protection of the civil Government, it was a laudable Instance of primitive Zeal, and agreeable at least to the Apostolical Spirit, if we may not call it an Apostolical Rule, to erect commodious Buildings for the Celebration of Divine Service, to consecrate and devote

*after Reparation, Dec. 31, 1716. 441*

vote them, with their Appurtenances, to SERM.  
the sole Use and Property of Almighty XIV.  
God, and to look upon it as a sacrilegious  
and accursed Thing, for any one to un-  
hallow what was so devoted, by prostitu-  
ting it to common and profane Uses. And  
lastly, to build them with more Magnifi-  
cence, and adorn them with more Splen-  
dor than private Dwellings, as well to ex-  
press their awful Sense of the Majesty and  
Glory of that Being who was to be wor-  
shipped there, as to testify their Gratitude  
to him as a Benefactor, and the Author of  
all the Blessings they enjoyed, whom they  
desired to honour with an ample Portion  
of the Substance he had bestowed on them,  
and like holy *David*, scorned to make an  
Offering to the Lord their God, of that  
which cost them Nothing, or next to No-  
thing. And the Mention of this natural-  
ly leads me to my

*Second Proposition, That in building  
of Churches, and all other good Works,  
God regards not so much the outward Act,  
as the Sincerity and Cheerfulness of the  
Mind. If we hope to recommend our-  
selves*

442 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*  
SERM. selves to his Favour, we must give willing-  
XIV. ly and with all our Heart.

'TIS certain no other Action can be denominated Righteous, or entitle the Performer of it to any Recompense at the Hand of God, but that which is done with an honest Intention, and prosecuted by honest Methods. 'Tis not the bare Event, how beneficial soever it may prove, that transfers any Merit to the Deed, if such Benefit were not the principal Thing the Actor had in View. God, we know, is able to produce Good out of the greatest Evil, he can make the worst Actions subservient to his Will, and the worst Men the Instruments of bringing his Purposes to pass. He can defeat the Counsels of the Ungodly by suffering them to succeed in their Attempts, and cause their very Defiance and Opposition to redound to his greater Glory; but such an Issue, so contrary to their Intention, will be of no Avail to them, who thus unwillingly promote his Honour.

WHEN the wicked Tempter, for Instance, seduced our first Parents to Disobedience and Rebellion, and caused them to forfeit  
that

that delightful Paradise, where the Almighty had at first instated them ; he did it with a malicious Design of totally ruining both them, and all their succeeding Race. And at first he seemed to have gained his End, the Bait was swallowed, Man did disobey, and was cast out of *Eden*. But it pleased the Divine Goodness to bring about an Event unforeseen and unintended by him ; by sending his Son to redeem Mankind thus lost and destitute, and to make them capable on very easy Conditions, of a glorious Immortality in Heaven, he did abundantly compensate the Loss of their earthly Paradise, and admit them to a much more desirable State, than they would have been entitled to, if they had never fallen.

BUT he whose mischievous Project ended in this happy Consequence, was so far from sharing in the Blessings and Advantages, of which he was accidentally the Occasion, that if any Aggravation of Sorrow, any additional Weight of Misery could be heaped on one already adjudged to the most exquisite and never ceasing Torments ; it must be such to him, to  
find

SERM.  
XIV.

SERM. find his spiteful Stratagem so crossed, his  
 XIV. Rage so baffled and disappointed, and those  
 hated Creatures whom he hoped to have  
 made as miserable as himself, promoted  
 and advanced by his Designs against them.

THERE is one Case indeed recorded in  
 Scripture, where the Authors of a Good,  
 which was far from their Thought and  
 Intention, were notwithstanding the better  
 for it, and seem to be even rewarded for  
 their wicked Purpose. I mean that of  
*Joseph's* Brethren, who Sold him into a  
 foreign Land, because they grudged him  
 that Place which he possessed in his Fa-  
 ther's Favour, little imagining that this  
 Act of theirs would prove the Occasion  
 of recommending him to the Favour of  
 so great a King. And yet when he was  
 arrived at the Height of his Power, those  
 very Brethren, who so unnaturally sought  
 his Destruction, are cherished and support-  
 ed by means of that Credit and Authority,  
 to which they had been the unwilling  
 Instruments of raising him.

BUT this was a singular Case, and we  
 may make some Judgment of the Reason  
 of it, from *Joseph's* Words to them, *Gen.*

*after Reparation, Dec. 31, 1716.* 445

xlv. 5. *Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with your selves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you, to preserve Life.* And again, ver. 8. *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.*

SERM.  
XIV.

The Almighty had a great End of Providence to serve, by suffering that righteous Person to be sent into Captivity, though that does not acquit or absolve from Guilt those human Agents who are concerned in bringing his Purposes to pass: Nor is any such thing implied in that tender Expression of *Joseph*, when he bids them *not be grieved, nor angry with themselves*: He could only forgive them so far as they had offended him, but toward God they were still Offenders, as they had disobeyed his Laws even while they were accomplishing his Designs.

BUT however, his Promise to *Abraham*, that he would multiply his Seed as the Sand, was to be kept inviolable; and these Sellers of their Brother, however criminal in that respect, were the Descendants from his Loins, who were appointed to diffuse his Race through so many different Branches, and therefore  
were

446 *At the Opening of St. Mary at Hill,*

SERM. were not to be cut off. To which we may  
XIV. add, that God was not willing to grieve  
the good Old Man their Father, by visit-  
ing the Iniquity upon them; and for his  
Sake probably, and at the Intercession of  
their Brother *Joseph*, he dealt mercifully  
with them, and suffered even their own  
Cruelty and Falshood to turn to their  
Temporal Advantage.

BUT as to the taking away their Sin,  
it certainly conduced less toward it, that  
they were acquitted by *Joseph*, than that  
they were condemned by themselves, when  
they made this Reflexion on their own  
Guilt, *We are verily guilty concerning our  
Brother, in that we saw the Anguish of his  
Soul, when he besought us, and we would  
not hear, therefore is this Distress come up-  
on us,* Gen. xlii. 21.


SUCH a Compunction and Remorse will  
be more available to any Sinner, than ei-  
ther the Candour and good Opinion of fal-  
lible Men, or the lucky Consequences his  
Actions may produce, when he acts with  
quite another Aim. God looks into our  
Hearts, observes the Motions and Ten-  
dencies



dencies of *them*, and it is from thence he SERM.  
passes his Judgment on us. XIV.

WE may pray, we may fast, we may give Alms, we may be the Founders of Hospitals, or of Churches, which are pious and commendable Deeds, when accompanied with Purity of Mind, and a sincere Love of God, and of our Neighbour; but if *he* discerns the latent Spring of any such plausible Performances to be Hypocrisy or Ostentation, Pride or Peevishness, a forced Compliance with Custom, a Sense of wordly Shame, or any other corrupt Motive, they will none of them be of any Account in his Sight.

AND to bring the Argument home to ourselves, after a long Discontinuance of Worship in this sacred Place, we are now assembled in it again, for the Performance of divine Offices. It is now become a more convenient and capacious Receptacle for the Living above, and for the Dead beneath, whose last Remains may now continue unmolested; the contrary whereof had hitherto been our Unhappiness and our great Annoyance.

SERM. WE behold it in a more amiable and  
 XIV.  inviting Form, not only recovered from that unseemly State, to which Length of Time and frequent Interments had reduced it, but enlivened with many new additional Ornaments, disposed, I hope, to the general Satisfaction, and, which is more material, so as truly to answer the Ends of our repairing hither.

TOWARD the accomplishing such a Work no small Expence was requisite, which has been defrayed partly by a legal Imposition, and in no contemptible Proportion by free and voluntary Contributions. And I trust that no Part of what has been brought in under either Article, has been given grudgingly or with Reluctance, or proceeded from any of those naughty and perverse Motives I just now suggested. In pious as well as charitable Donations God loveth a chearful Giver, as you may judge from those Words in my Text, *of every Man that giveth it willingly with his Heart, ye shall take my Offering.* If it be so given, he owns it, he accepts it, he calls it *his*.

IN short, the Work itself is so commendable; and the Occasion was so urgent, SERM.  
XIV. that I think no just or reasonable Exception can be taken to it. And that the Cost which has been bestowed in adorning this House of God; where you all meet as Friends, and unite in the same Petitions, may never prove the Ground of Strife and Animosity among you, let not him that has given much censure or revile him that has given little, but content himself with the tacit Approbation of God and his own Conscience, for that which with a holy and religious Mind he has dedicated to his Service.

AND since you have in general shewn so laudable a Zeal in fitting up this House of Prayer, may it not rationally be expected that you will constantly attend it, and not throw away your Charge, by rarely appearing in it, and neglecting to assemble yourselves together? Can any one find Ease or Comfort in his own Mind from this Reflection, that he has been instrumental in providing a decent and beautiful Church for others to frequent, in the same Place where it is his own Duty to frequent it as much as they?

SERM. AND to your constant Attendance, let

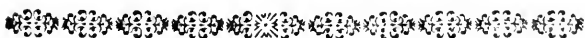
XIV. me once more exhort you to add a careful Attention and reverent Behaviour when present ; let no unbecoming Posture, no light and trivial Words or Actions be observed among you ; let it not be said that the inanimate Fabrick appears with a more graceful Regularity, and contributes more to the Beauty of Holiness, than you who are the living Church, the Members of Christ's Body. To sum up all, Keep your Foot, watch your Actions, and fix your Thoughts, whenever you enter into this House of G O D.














# SERMON XV.

Thanksgiving for the Restoration,  
*May 29, 1660, before the House  
 of Commons, May 29, 1717.*



PSAL. lxxvi. 10.

*Surely the Wrath of Man shall  
 praise thee ; the Remainder of  
 Wrath shalt thou restrain.*




 HIS Psalm is a grateful Com-  



 T  



 memorialion of some great and  
 signal Deliverance, which the  
*Jews* had obtained from their  
 Enemies ; and most probably was compo-  
 sed on Occasion of the miraculous Defeat  
 of *Sennacherib*, King of *Assyria*, who had  
 invested *Jerusalem* with a formidable Host,

SERM.  
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SERM. and put the Inhabitants into the utmost  
 XV. *Confarnation.* Dispirited by the Number,  
 and awed by the insulting Threats of their  
 Besiegers, they began to despair of all Suc-  
 cour or Relief, and thought of nothing  
 else but Fire and Sword, Ravage and De-  
 solation, and all the fatal Extremities that  
 could be expected from merciless and in-  
 human Conquerors.

IN the midst of this distressed State, it  
 pleased the good Providence of God to  
 send them an unexpected Rescue: The  
 numerous Army that surrounded their  
 Walls, being intimidated by an invisible  
 Power, slaughtered by an invisible Hand,  
 and the powerful Invader himself soon after  
 slain by the Hands of his two Sons in the  
 Temple of his Idol.

IN Memory, I say, of some such De-  
 liverance, and, as learned Interpreters sup-  
 pose, of the Deliverance I have mentioned,  
 was this Psalm composed by *Asaph*: Which,  
 as it all along extols the irresistible Power  
 of God, and the certain Victory of those,  
 on whose Side he engages; so especially  
 this Verse of my Text sets forth the Folly  
 and Madness of contending with God, or  
 such

such whose Cause he is pleased to espouse; since the fiercest Opposition that can be made, will redound, in the End, to his Glory: Nor can it last any longer, or prevail any farther, than he himself thinks fit to permit it. *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee; the Remainder of Wrath shalt thou restrain.* SERM.  
XV.

By *Wrath*, we are here to understand rebellious Rage, or tyrannical Fury, an outrageous hostile Bent of Mind, and Thirst after Mischief. By God's *restraining* that Wrath, I conceive to be meant, his interposing in due Time, cutting short the Designs of such wrathful Men, before they have completed the intended Measure of their Iniquity. And by the *Remainder* of that Wrath, so much of their mischievous Contrivance, as is still unaccomplished, and which the over-ruling Power of God prevents the Execution of. Whereas the former Part of the Verse, *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee*, seems rather to refer to such of the Devices of wicked Men, as had succeeded in the Fact, though they were disappointed in the End proposed, which contrary to

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SERM. their Expectation, was converted to the  
 XV. Glory of God, and to their own Shame  
 and Confusion.

THIS then we may take to be the Im-  
 portance of the whole Verse. ‘ Although  
 ‘ for a while thou sufferest the Sons of  
 ‘ Violence to prosper, to insult thine In-  
 ‘ heritance, to oppress thine Elect, and  
 ‘ to lay Waste thy Dwelling-Place; yet  
 ‘ so far is this seeming Prevalence of theirs  
 ‘ from diminishing thy Honour, that it  
 ‘ only helps to magnify and exalt it; These  
 ‘ are the Instruments of thy Vengeance,  
 ‘ the Scourges wherewith thou correctest  
 ‘ thy beloved Children; these Men do but  
 ‘ execute thy Decrees, whilst they are per-  
 ‘ secuting thy Saints, and whilst they think  
 ‘ they resist thy Will, are then actually  
 ‘ fulfilling it. But this once performed,  
 ‘ if they have any Dregs of Fury left, any  
 ‘ Vengeance of their own to wreak, after  
 ‘ thine is satisfied; thou then interposest  
 ‘ with a high Hand, and stretched-out  
 ‘ Arm to baffle their Devices, and con-  
 ‘ found their Malice, and answerest them,  
 ‘ as thou didst the haughty *Sennacherib*:  
 ‘ *Because thy Rage against me, and thy*  
 ‘ *Tumult*



‘ Tumult is come up into mine Ears; there-  
‘ fore will I put my Hook into thy Nose, SERM.  
‘ and my Bridle in thy Lips, and I will XV.  
‘ turn thee back by the Way by which thou  
‘ camest, Isa. xxxvii. 29.

THIS is the most natural and received Interpretation of the Passage now before us. It would take up too much of my Discourse to shew the Reasons for preferring this to other Explications that have been given of the same Text, occasioned by the Latitude of some Phrases in the Original; and I think it the less necessary, because the Doctrine I shall urge will follow from the Words taken under any of those Meanings.

Now, the Things I would infer from this Observation of the Psalmist, are these,

I. THAT Almighty God, for wise and good Reasons, does for some time bear with the Instruments of Evil, and suffers them without Controul to proceed to a very great and surprizing Height of Impiety. But,

II. That

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SERM.


XV.



II. THAT there is a determinate Degree of Wickedness, beyond which the divine Providence will not suffer them to pass, but manifestly interposes to prevent the fatal Consequences that would follow from an unrestrained, unlimited Power, joined with a malicious Will, and brutal Disposition to Mischief. After which I shall proceed,

III. To consider that particular Act of Providence, in the middle of the last Century, which we are now met to commemorate; when though the Wrath of Man had prevailed to an excessive high Degree, so as to murder the best of Kings, and overturn the best of Constitutions; it yet pleased God to restrain the Remainder of that Wrath, by the Restoration of the Royal Family, and settling us again on our ancient Foundations.

*First*, THAT Almighty God, for wise and good Reasons, does for some time bear

bear with the Instruments of Evil, and SERM.  
suffers them, without Controul, to proceed XV.  
to a very great and surprizing Height of  
Impiety, 

As to the Fact itself, that this Case does frequently happen; that there are daily Instances of dejected Innocence, and triumphant Villany; that the great Oppressors of Mankind do often flourish in Pomp and Splendor; that they enjoy, or seem to enjoy, an Abundance of all outward Comforts, and fatten on the Spoils of the injured and oppressed; that this, I say, is a Case of daily Occurrence, as well the Testimony of Holy Scripture, as the universal Experience of Mankind, and the Complaints on this very Subject as Universal, make it needless for me to prove.

BUT it seems a Thing of more Consequence, and far greater Difficulty, to reconcile these Things with the Justice and Holiness of God, and to account for the Equity of such Dispensations, than to prove that such there are. But this Objection, however plausible and popular, is founded on such apparent Mistakes, that nothing but a latent Infidelity, and a secret Distrust  
of

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SERM. of a future State, where an equal Retri-  
 XV. bution shall be made for all that we have  
 done and suffered here, could induce Men  
 to insist on it, or to urge it as a Defect of  
 Providence.

ONE great Mistake in this Objection is, that it supposes the Miseries of this Life to be the proper Punishment of Vice, and the Pleasures or Honours of it, the Reward of Virtue. Whereas, these are not the Benefits we contract for, nor the Wages for which we serve. A Crown of Glory and Immortality will be the undoubted Portion of such as have Patience to expect it, and who approve themselves God's faithful Servants: As for temporal Prosperity, so much of it as is conducive to that End, or at least not inconsistent with it, may be added to our Portion, by the bountiful Grace and Favour of our supreme Lord: But such Kinds or Degrees of it, as that great Searcher of Hearts foresees would prove a Snare to us, and be the Means of beguiling us of a better Inheritance, he most indulgently denies us, and it is our great Privilege to be without them.


NOR

NOR are good Men promised an EX-SERM.  
emption from worldly Crosses and Mis- XV.  
fortunes : Their Religion and Goodness  
will indeed protect them from some Evils,  
but will expose them to others ; which  
Suffering for Righteousness Sake, however  
grievous in itself, may be made light and  
easy by this Consideration, that it gives  
them a sure Title to a proportionable De-  
gree of Blessedness hereafter. And in the  
mean Time, a firm Reliance on that Blef-  
sing in Reversion, founded on the Testi-  
mony of a good Conscience ; the repeated  
Experience of their own Stedfastness under  
the greatest Pressures, by the Assistance of  
God's Grace ; the habitual Readiness they  
have acquired of withstanding all the  
Temptations that can be offered, either by  
soothing Flattery, or terrifying Force ;  
the Command of their Passions, and Con-  
quest of their ghostly Enemies, are such a  
comfortable Support to the Mind under  
the severest of worldly Evils, that even  
then, when they seem most afflicted and  
distressed, they are full of inward Joy, and  
inexpressible Satisfaction.

AGAIN

SERM. AGAIN, we have very wrong Notions  
 XV. of the Attributes of God, if we imagine  
 that either his Holiness or his Justice suffer  
 the least Diminution by those promiscuous  
 Events that befall the Righteous and the  
 Wicked. As to the former, what greater  
 Argument can be given of it, than that he  
 has so strictly forbidden whatsoever is con-  
 trary to it, and so solemnly declared, that  
*without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.*

IT is true, he could, if he had pleased,  
 have prevented the Evil he forbids, and  
 have enforced his verbal Prohibitions by  
 actual Restraints. He could have tied us  
 up from Vice by the Chains of invincible  
 Necessity, and have dragged us up to  
 Heaven by the Cords of a blind Fatality.  
 But how then should we have served the  
 great End of his Providence, which was  
 to bestow a Heavenly Kingdom on those,  
 who by a constant Perseverance in Virtue,  
 should render themselves (through the  
 Mercies of Christ) proper Objects of it?  
 Whereas, if there were no Vice in the  
 World, there could be no such Thing as  
 Virtue: In the Pursuit whereof, if it were  
 not our Choice that directed us, but our  
 Fate

Fate that led us, we might with just as SERM.  
much Reason expect a Reward for eating XV.  
when we are hungry, drinking when we  
are thirsty, or performing any other na-  
tural Action, as for being honest, chaste,  
or temperate. 

BUT Man had his Portion assigned him  
on very different Terms : He was made a  
free Agent ; he was endued with rational  
Powers, and an elective Faculty : He was  
required and enabled to glorify his Maker,  
on certain Conditions stipulated between  
his Creator and him : He lives here in a  
State of Trial and Probation, invited and  
called upon to obey, by the strongest Ob-  
ligations both of Interest and Duty, but  
tempted to disobey by outward Objects  
and inward Lusts, and not incapable of  
yielding to the Force of such Temptations.  
God has set before him Life and Death,  
Good and Evil ; he has made him sen-  
sible what will be the Consequence of ei-  
ther Way of Acting ; and after many gra-  
cious Calls and Fatherly Admonitions to  
make a wise Choice, leaves both Ways  
open, and him to the Liberty of that  
Course, to which his own Discretion, thus  
prepared

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SERM. prepared, thus byassed and influenced to  
 XV. the better and happier Choice, shall guide  
 him.

THIS is the Way of God's dealing with Mankind ; and what Pretence can we take from such a Conduct, to arraign his Purity, or tax him as a Lover and Encourager of Vice. Not to hinder a Thing when we can, and to approve it, are far from being equivalent Terms : There may be many Reasons, even in human Conduct, why we chuse to bear with that which we condemn : And so there are in the Divine. God makes a strict Proof of the Sincerity of his Servants, that those who are faithful may be made manifest, that their Integrity may shine out with a distinguishing Lustre : He tries us like Silver, and hopes to find us as pure. He gives us Opportunities of offending him, which he wishes we may never take. He is far from desiring the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn and be saved ; and in order thereto, he has encouraged, commanded, besought, nay even inclined us, and only does not necessitate us to be good ; and consequently, his barely  
 permitting



permitting that Impiety, which he so manifestly hates, can never be construed as an Approbation of it. SERM.  
XV.

SINCE then God may bear with Sin and sinful Men, without being a Favourer of either; how far, or to what Degree he may bear with them, he sure himself is the most proper Judge. The greatest Irregularities that can prevail in the World, are no more a Reflection on his Holiness, than the least, and the Self-same Reasons will account for both: Some Monsters of an unusual Size may be allowed of in the Moral, as well as in the Natural World, and there may be Giants in Iniquity, as well as in Stature.

NOR is God any more to be charged with the Want of Justice, than of Purity. As for all the unequal Dispensations of Blessings and Afflictions we complain of, and the little Proportion they bear to the several Demerits of Men; this is a much better Argument that there must be a God, who will judge the World, than that there is none who governs it. The divine Justice is indeed concerned, that the good and evil Actions of Men may,

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SERM. sooner or later, meet with a suitable Re-  
 XV. compense : But whether in this Life, or  
 the next, or in both ; infinite, unerring  
 Wisdom can best direct. Why he should  
 not always do it in this, or at least, not  
 just at that Time, and in that Manner we  
 would have him, the following Reasons  
 may be offered, which I shall but just men-  
 tion, and forbear to enlarge on them.

BEFORE we presume then to murmur  
 on this Score, and complain that we are  
 hardly dealt with, we ought seriously to  
 consider : That whatever Afflictions the  
 best Men suffer, 'tis far less than they de-  
 serve : That happy is their Case, who have  
 their Portion of Evil allotted them in  
 this Life : That every Thing the World  
 reputes an Evil, is not so in Reality : That  
 if God should visibly interpose to restrain  
 every Act of Injustice, he must work con-  
 tinual Miracles : That the temporal Inte-  
 rests of good and bad Men are so twisted  
 and linked together, that the one cannot  
 suffer any remarkable Calamity, without  
 involving the other in a considerable Share  
 of it : That if it had been the constant  
 Method of Providence, to punish every  
 Offence,

Offence, by sending some immediate temporal Judgment on the Offender; the Race of Men would have been but of short Continuance, and the World had long since been again unpeopled: That if every Fact were to meet with its Reward, as soon as it was committed, it would leave no Room for Faith in Blessings or Punishments to come: Nay, such a Proceeding would almost as necessarily over-rule the Will of Man, and determine it one Way, as if he had no Liberty of Election at all. All which considered, I think, we may very fairly and reasonably conclude, that it is not without wise and good Reasons, that Almighty GOD does for some time bear with the Instruments of Evil, and suffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and surprizing Height of Impiety: which was my first Proposition. But, What will farther qualify the seeming Hardships; and effectually convince us that there is *a Reward for the Righteous, and a GOD that judgeth the Earth*; I come now in the

*Second Place* to shew, That there is a determinate degree of Wickedness, beyond which

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SERM. divine Providence will not suffer Men to  
 XV. pass, but manifestly interposes to prevent  
 the fatal Extremities that would follow from  
 an unrestrained, unlimited Power, joined  
 with a malicious Will, and brutal Dispo-  
 sition to Mischief.

I do not affirm, that this Interposition of God to restrain enormous Wickedness does ordinarily appear by miraculous Effects, and supernatural Operations. Not but that he has reserved to himself a right of overruling second Causes, and diverting Nature from its settled Course: He has not made it so far his Substitute, as not to be able to resume the Power into his own Hands, whenever he sees a just Occasion. When the Exigence of Affairs requires it, when mighty Mischiefs call for no common Aid, when all the usual Remedies fail, and all the Foundations of the Earth are out of Course; he then supersedes the Commission of Nature, rules by a special Providence, and by stupendous Instances of his Power convinces the World that a superior Agent is at Work. He writes his Judgments in such legible Characters, that all Men who  
 see

see them shall say, *This hath God done, for they shall perceive that it is his Work.* SERM: XV.

THE whole sacred History abounds with remarkable Instances of his miraculous Power, both in preserving and destroying. Nor have later Ages been without the Experience of some Events, the immediate Author of which must be confessedly more than human. But this is very rare, and not the usual Way in which he chuses to exert his restraining Power, and to curb the Extravagance of lawless Oppression. He can compass his Ends as effectually by inferior Agents, and make us the Instruments of executing his Judgments on one another. He is the supreme Lord of Nature, and of every Power belonging to it: He can command the Assistance both of free and necessary Agents, and by an imperceptible Influence dispose and put into Motion those subordinate Causes, whose Concurrence will best accomplish any Purpose which he is determined to bring to pass.

BUT it may be asked, How shall we distinguish these providential Appointments from the ordinary Occurrences that befall

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SERM. us? By what Rule must we judge, *when*  
 XV. *the Hand of God is in any Event, and*  
*when it is a Matter of common Course?* Must we be guided in this Case meerly by the Success? Must we look upon those as most favoured by GOD, who are most fortunate and thriving, and ascribe the Advantages they enjoy to GOD's peculiar Interposal in their Behalf? This is a Pretension indeed which has been often made, as well by the Enemies as Friends of GOD, and by none more than the Authors of that Confusion with which this Nation was so long distracted, and to which the Deliverance of this Day put a happy and a glorious End. They succeeded in their base and bloody Attempts, which emboldened them to style the most wicked and detestable of their Actions, *the blessed Work*, and *the Lord's Work*; and while they seemed to ascribe to him the Praise, they entitled him to the Guilt of all they had been doing.

BUT to answer the Enquiry. 'Tis not the Success of any Event, 'tis not a train of lucky Accidents, but the Righteousness of the Cause, and Excellency of the End  
 which

which is to be served by any great Delive-  
rance, that can encourage us to believe it  
is sent from God. He is a God of Jus-  
tice, and of purer Eyes than to behold  
Iniquity with Approbation: He is a God  
of Peace and Order, and not of Discord  
and Confusion. Whatever Dispensations  
are agreeable to the former of these, are  
worthy the divine Being; and such as he  
delights to be called the Author of: But  
whatsoever tends to produce the contrary  
Effects, though he permits, though he  
connives at, though he bears with it for  
a Season, for Reasons mentioned under the  
foregoing Head; yet is so far from his Doing,  
or from being warranted by his Authority,  
that in his own due Time he will effectually  
reverse it.

LET us not think, when his Providence  
winks, that it is unobserving, but persuade  
ourselves that it is a close, though silent  
Observer of human Actions, and treasures  
up Wrath, though it forbears to strike;  
till roused at last by daring Impiety, and  
provoked by outrageous Violence, the  
Lord awakes as one out of Sleep, and puts  
his Enemies to a perpetual Shame. We

SERM.  
XV.

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SERM. may rest assured that every Thing is beautiful in its Season, and that God can direct the Actions of wicked, as well as of good Men to his own Glory. The Lord hath made all Things for himself, yea even the wicked for the Day of Evil.

WHATEVER Power the Instruments of Ill have, their Commission still is limited, and they have their Bounds set them, which they cannot pass. The Devil had Inclination enough, at first, to have afflicted *Job* in his Person, as well as in his Fortune and Relations, but that he was withheld by the express Command of God: *Behold, all that he hath is in thy Power, only upon himself put not forth thy Hand.* And as willing was he, upon a farther Trial, wherein his Commission was enlarged, to have removed out of the World such a professed Enemy of the Powers of Darkness, if he had not been under such another Prohibition. *Behold, he is in thy Hand, but save his Life.*

AND as God manifestly abridges the Power of the Wicked, after they have served his Ends; so he sometimes lays invisible



visible Restraints upon the Will: As he SERM.  
baffles the Rage of some, so he softens that XV.  
of others, and takes from them the very  
Disposition to do Evil. A remarkable In-  
stance whereof we have in the Case of St.  
*Paul*, who at first was a Blasphemer, and  
a Persecutor, and injurious, a Confederate  
with the Murderers of St. *Stephen*, and one  
that consented to his Death: He made  
Havock of the Church, and entred into  
every House, haling Men and Women,  
and committing them to Prison. And thus  
far the Almighty thought fit to bear with  
him, as well knowing that all this Wrath  
and Fierceness would turn to his Praise.  
But when he yet breathed out Threatnings  
and Slaughter, when not contented with  
what he had done at *Jerusalem*, he was  
going to *Damascus* with the like cruel In-  
tention; this was the Remainder of his  
Wrath, and this was happily restrained by  
his wonderful Conversion.

As bad as the World is, if the great  
Sovereign of it did not sometimes interpose  
to set Things right, it would be much worse:  
And

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SERM. And if Men would but reflect on the Evils

XV. he prevents, as well as those he bears with, they would not be so forward to speak and think injuriously of his Providence. But that *we* may be possessed with juster Notions, and look back with a grateful Remembrance on the great Deliverance he formerly wrought for us, let us in the

*Third Place* consider that particular Act of Providence, in the middle of the last Century, which we are now met to commemorate; when, though the Wrath of Man had prevailed to an excessive Degree, so as to murder the best of Kings, and over-turn the best of Constitutions; yet it pleased God to restrain the Remainder of that Wrath, by restoring the Royal Family, and settling us again on our ancient Foundations.

WHEN it seemed good to the divine Wisdom, to restore the Body Politick to a perfect Soundness, to recover it from that low and languishing Condition, to which its severe and reiterated Convulsions had reduced it, to heal up those Wounds which for so many Years had been kept bleeding,  
and

and to put an End to that long and dismal SERM.  
Train of Miseries, in which our own Wick- XV.  
edness had involved us. When God was  
pleas'd, as at the first Formation of the  
World, to bring forth Light out of Dark-  
ness, and Order out of Confusion : And  
that too by such unlikely and unpromising  
Instruments, by working so sudden and sur-  
prizing a Change in the Hearts of some,  
who had been the Authors of many Mis-  
chiefs, to whom much of the Ill that had  
been done might be imputed, and who,  
but a very little Time before, seem'd ra-  
ther to be contriving a Prolongation and  
Encrease of the Nation's Calamities, if  
greater they could have been ; as to make  
them the Authors, under him, of so glo-  
rious a Deliverance, of settling the King-  
dom in a perfect Tranquillity, uniting the  
divided Interests and Factions of Men, who  
before were in the utmost Distraction be-  
tween their many Lords and their various  
Forms of Government, freeing them from  
the worst Consequence of habitual Sin, the  
almost inevitable Necessity of sinning on,  
and making it their Safety, where it was  
always

SERM. always their Duty to render their Allegi-  
 XV. ance.

AND such was the Case, when our late injured Sovereign was so unanimously brought back to his rightful Possessions, which, through a Succession of so many Years, had been detained from him, by the Avarice and Ambition, the Violence and Iniquity of his Father's Murderers. When the Hearts of his Subjects were turned to him, as one Man, notwithstanding they had been so long alienated; and though they had been accustomed, after the Example of their seditious Rulers, and more seditious Teachers, to think and speak of him, not only without Reverence and common Decency, but in the vilest Terms of Abhorrence and Reproach.

WHEN the good old Establishment, both in Church and State, was so peaceably introduced, after so long a Disuse and Interruption; and the People, who had run through so many Changes both of Religion and Government, were so generally disposed to say of the old one, that there was none like it: They remembered then with a sensible Regret for their past Follies,  
 how


how dearly they had paid for their giddy SERM.  
Curiosity, and wanton Desire to alter a XV.  
safe and happy Constitution: How they  
had shaken off the imaginary Yoke both  
of Monarchy and Prelacy, and never till  
then were real Slaves: How they had sei-  
zed on the Possessions of both; and when  
they had done so, like other Robbers,  
quarrelled among themselves about dividing  
the Booty: How they had been deluded  
by false Representations of their Christian  
Liberty, and taught to undervalue Ordi-  
nances, the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's  
Supper not excepted, the Use of which  
had been intermitted to a scandalous De-  
gree; with what a misguided Zeal they  
had lent a Hand to the pulling down the  
strong Holds of what they called Ecclesi-  
astical Tyranny, and destroyed all Disci-  
pline and Jurisdiction in the Church; and  
when that was done, how miserably they  
were sometimes confounded by the Want  
of any Discipline at all: How heavily at  
other Times they groaned under the Se-  
verity of a much more rigorous and impo-  
sing Church-Government, than that which  
they had discarded: How they, who had  
joined

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SERM. joined in a Cry of Persecution against the  
 XV. Bishops, when they came afterward to be  
 ~~~~~ divided among themselves, as they severally happened to have their Turns of prevailing, persecuted one another with greater Heat, and treated each other with less Indulgence, than they had even complained of in the Times of their regular Governors.

THEY saw how fatally they had been misled by the noisy Clamour, and plausible Pretences of some turbulent and unruly Men, who complained loudly of those Grievances they meant to make heavier, and expressed a tender Concern for their Liberties, when all they aimed at, was more effectually to enslave them.

AND surely there is no Bondage so irksome, no Chains that feel so weighty, or gall so sorely, as those which are imposed by one's Equals or Inferiors; which was the Case in those rebellious Times, when the vilest of the People had thrust themselves into the highest Stations, and, with a full Swing of Violence and Oppression, larded it over their Superiors. The Liberties and Properties of their Fellow-Subjects were
 arbitrarily

arbitrarily invaded, without any Method SERM.
of Redress: Nay, the sure Consequence of XV.
seeking a Redress of their Grievances was, 
to be more heavily aggrieved for seeking it :
Justice was then decided by the military
Sword, and all civil Power was at an End,
or nothing at least remained, but the Mock-
Appearance of it.

THESE, with many more insupportable
Calamities, were the Result of those causeless
Jealousies and Discontents, which embroi-
led the Reign of the most gracious and
indulgent Prince that ever filled a Throne,
the most tender of his People's Rights
and Liberties, the farthest from pursuing
those arbitrary and destructive Measures,
in which his unhappy Son, by the Advice
of treacherous Counsellors, was so deeply
engaged, as to make a subsequent Change
of the Government necessary and unavoid-
able. But no such threatenng Projects to
Religion and Liberty were formed under
the Father's Government ; His People
were, or might have been, the happiest
Subjects upon Earth, could they have un-
derstood or valued their own Happiness.
But a Spirit of Faction and Discord was gone
forth ;

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SERM. forth ; they were quarrellsome and uneasy ;
XV. they knew not why ; something they still
wanted, they knew not what ; they were
angry and dissatisfied, and resolved to be
so, in spite of the most condescending Me-
thods that could be taken for their Satis-
faction. Artful and designing Men knew
how to work upon their Discontents, and
fill them with groundless Fears, till they
had raised such a Ferment as broke out
into Treason and actual Rebellion, and
from thence proceeded to the Murder of
the Sovereign, and Extirpation of the
Royal Family : Thus far did God suffer
their Wrath to prevail to their own Hurt,
and make their Crime their Punishment.
But when they had smarted sufficiently
for their perverse Folly, and sensibly ex-
perienced the Difference between an easy
Government, and a State of Anarchy ; he
restored the former to them by so strange
and surprizing a Turn of Providence, as
few Histories can parallel. An Event wished
for by many, hoped for by few, but ex-
pected by none. A Design carefully con-
cealed from any one's Knowledge by the
principal Actor, and perhaps not fully re-
solved

solved on by himself many Days before SERM.
the Accomplishment of it ; but when ac- XV.
complished, received with universal Joy,
and submitted to with so ready and chear-
ful an Acquiescence, with so little of Strug-
gle and Opposition, as if the whole Body
of the People had been in the Secret of the
Restoration, and been disposed by some
previous Notice to expect the Blessing of
such a Change.

BUT the Disposition was from above ;
it was the secret Influence of a divine Mo-
nitor, that wrought so sudden a Conver-
sion in them, that shewed them the Er-
rors of their former ill Conduct, and taught
them to embrace their own Happiness and
Security. How wise is God in his Coun-
sels, how wonderful in his Works ! How
short is human Foresight, how precarious
the Schemes of the ablest Politicians ! By
what unexpected Means, in how unlooked
for a Manner are the greater Dispensations
of Providence brought to pass ! Vain is the
Strength of the Mighty, useles is the
Craft of the Subtle, in crossing any Ends,
which he is resolved to accomplish, or in
promoting those which he is determined

SERM. to bring to nought. Without his Affi-
 XV. tance, neither can the strong Man gain
 the Battle, nor the swift win the Race,
 nor Men of the deepest Reach of Under-
 standing succeed in their Designs. They
 may value themselves highly on their sup-
 posed Abilities, and that Superiority of Ge-
 nius, by which they are distinguished from
 other Men; they may entertain themselves
 with their large and comprehensive Views,
 and the Vastness of their Schemes: But
 when they have deliberated with the ut-
 most Sagacity, 'tis God at last that will
 determine the Issue. He has numberless
 Ways of defeating their best laid Strata-
 gems, and turning their pretended Wisdom
 into Foolishness. They are infinitely more
 inconsiderable in his Hands, than the
 meanest Instrument they work with is
 in theirs. He can cast them down from
 the most promising Height of Expectation,
 when they are big with vain Hopes, and
 think themselves out of the Reach of Dis-
 appointment.

THE truest Wisdom then is that which
 cometh from above: The surest Policy is
 to recommend ourselves to the divine Pro-
 tection,

tection, to engage in no Designs wherein we may not reasonably promise ourselves his Favour and Encouragement. And they will ever be the best Patriots and the best Subjects, will contribute most effectually to the Welfare and Preservation of their King and Country, who prosecute all their Aims by the most honourable, righteous, and christian Methods, and direct them to the Glory of that God, without whose Blessing on our Endeavours, whatever we take in Hand must unavoidably miscarry.

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XV.

To whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.



ERRATA in VOL. III.

*Page 226. l. 5. read hundreds. p. 335.
r. Jezreelite. p. 414. l. 5, 6. r. destitute.
p. 417. l. 2. and p. 424. l. 6. and p. 447.
l. 13. r. worldly. p. 474. l. last, read
sensible.*







